

**STUDENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS  
OF ONE-TO-ONE INSTRUMENTAL AND  
VOCAL TUITION IN A CONSERVATOIRE**

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February 2006

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award  
of Doctor of Philosophy



# ABSTRACT

Little research has been undertaken in the area of one-to-one instrumental and vocal teaching in Higher Education. For the most part the processes and techniques involved have remained behind the closed doors of the teaching studio.

This thesis reports on research undertaken by an instrumental teacher in a conservatoire, which aimed to develop understanding about the ways in which one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition is conceptualised in higher education, and effective practices are perceived. An empirical phenomenological approach has been used to analyse students' and teachers' perceptions articulated through interviews.

Findings demonstrated that teachers were conscious of the uniqueness of students' needs in learning, but did not always adapt their teaching accordingly. Whilst they were concerned to support their students, aspects of the teaching techniques which they articulated did not provide a student-oriented learning environment, and in many cases students showed little autonomy and responsibility for their own learning. They identified a trust and dependency on their teacher for guidance as a musician, often mirroring their teacher's views about the fundamental purposes and processes involved in one-to-one tuition, even though teachers' views showed considerable diversity. The one-to-one relationship between teacher and a student clearly had a huge impact on their learning, in some cases constructive, in others inhibiting.

These findings suggested that, given the long tradition of one-to-one instrumental and vocal teaching at this level, extensive research needs to be done to compare the benefits of one-to-one with other learning environments, and that schemes of professional development for instrumental/vocal teachers should also be considered.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research has only come about through the involvement of a considerable number of people, and I am extremely grateful to them all for their diverse support and input through the process. In particular I should like to thank:

Professor Susan Hallam, who has supervised the work, for her skill and inspiration;

Colleagues at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama for their encouragement, critical thinking, and material support, in particular Peter Gane, Head of Wind, Brass and Percussion, Professor George Odam, Head of Research, and Deborah Williams, Director of Academic Support;

Colleagues and friends who have scrutinised drafts of the work, and the members of my study group at the Institute of Education, originally facilitated by Dr. Jane Hurry;

All the teachers and students who participated in the research;

My husband, Simon Couzens, and my children, Emma, Seleni and Tom Sewart, for their unfailing energy, tolerance and support, without which this work would never have been completed.

# CONTENTS

<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Chapter 1 – Introduction.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Preliminary research.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Breathing and oboe playing .....</b>	<b>19</b>
The literature.....	21
The perspective of scientific analysis.....	23
Action research with oboe students at the Guildhall School	26
The relationship between anxiety, breathing and physical tension in playing.....	28
Roles in the one-to-one student-teacher relationship .....	29
Critical evaluation of my own teaching.....	30
Implications.....	31
Feedback, reflective practice, and the power of peer learning.....	31
<b>The characteristics of one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Aims.....</b>	<b>35</b>
Thesis structure.....	35
 <b>Chapter 2 – Literature review of instrumental and vocal teaching in higher education.....</b>	 <b>36</b>
<b>The scope of research in instrumental and vocal teaching in higher education.....</b>	 <b>36</b>
Interaction in lessons.....	40
The relationship between teacher and student.....	49
Practising .....	50
Summary.....	53



<b>Conceptual models of instrumental teaching and learning.....</b>	<b>55</b>
Schon's model of apprenticeship.....	56
Apprenticeship and its limitations in the twenty-first century.....	59
Artistry.....	65
<b>The insight of theories of teaching and learning in higher education.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>One-to-one relationships within the practicum of learning.....</b>	<b>71</b>
Perceptions of one-to-one tuition, and dysfunctional Relationships.....	71
Commitment to one-to-one relationships.....	72
Parallels in PhD supervision.....	76
The peer group.....	81
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>82</b>
 <b>Chapter 3 – Methodology.....</b>	 <b>85</b>
<b>Meeting the needs of the conservatoire context.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>The conceptual framework.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Research methods.....</b>	<b>92</b>
Interview schedule and process.....	92
Pilot interviews.....	95
<b>Participants.....</b>	<b>95</b>
Ethical considerations.....	97
<b>Data analysis.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Reliability, validity and generalisability.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>101</b>
 <b>Chapter 4 – Findings from the interviews with teachers.....</b>	 <b>102</b>
<b>The professional profile of the teachers interviewed.....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Aims in teaching.....</b>	<b>106</b>
Developing the resources needed to be a musician.....	110
Tension between the transmission of a musical/instrumental heritage and facilitating autonomy in learning.....	111

The art of listening.....	117
Student self-confidence as prerequisite to effective learning, or an aim of one-to-one tuition?.....	119
<b>Teaching processes.....</b>	<b>125</b>
Diversity of teaching strategies and resources.....	125
Teaching driven by musical, technical or learning concerns	128
The use of audio and video recording.....	131
Feedback in lessons.....	135
Monitoring learning, monitoring teaching.....	136
<b>The one-to-one relationship.....</b>	<b>139</b>
Intense expectations of the one-to-one relationship.....	139
Trust in the one-to-one relationship.....	142
Difficulties in the one-to-one relationship.....	145
Different approaches to the boundaries of the one-to-one relationship.....	146
<b>The context of one-to-one tuition.....</b>	<b>149</b>
The value of group learning.....	149
Scarce knowledge of, or engagement in, the wider context of learning beyond the one-to-one lesson.....	151
Practising.....	151
The benefits of teaching.....	153
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>154</b>

## **Chapter 5 – Findings from the interviews with students..... 158**

<b>Profile of the students.....</b>	<b>159</b>
Patterns of one-to-one tuition.....	160
Previous musical education.....	161
<b>Aims and professional goals.....</b>	<b>164</b>
Professional vocations.....	164
The challenges of professional music.....	167
The fear of failure.....	169
<b>Motivation and autonomy in learning.....</b>	<b>172</b>
The effect of one-to-one tuition on motivation.....	172

Changing attitudes of a teacher affecting motivation.....	178
Students' awe of teachers affecting motivation.....	178
Sources of motivation outside of one-to-one tuition.....	180
The impact of teaching strategies on autonomy in learning.....	180
The impact of having several teachers on responsibility in learning.....	182
<b>Processes of learning.....</b>	<b>182</b>
Differences between having one and more than one teacher	182
Lesson structure.....	184
The relationship between musical and technical focus in lessons.....	185
Successful teaching strategies.....	186
Communication about difficulties.....	188
Planning.....	189
Monitoring and evaluating.....	190
<b>The one-to-one relationship.....</b>	<b>194</b>
The benefits of one-to-one tuition.....	194
Characterisation of a professional/personal relationship.....	195
The boundaries of the one-to-one relationship.....	200
Characterisation of effective and less effective personal qualities in teaching.....	203
Negotiating difficulties in the relationship with a teacher....	203
<b>The wider contexts of learning.....</b>	<b>208</b>
Integration of one-to-one lessons in the curriculum.....	208
Group learning and the peer group.....	210
Practising.....	213
Processes of transition in a music college.....	216
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>218</b>

## **Chapter 6 –The match between teachers and students.....223**

### **Vocational apprenticeship: David (1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate), Brian (1<sup>st</sup> year postgraduate), and Amanda (teacher).....224**

Introduction.....	224
David – aims and processes.....	225
David – the one-to-one relationship.....	227
David – the context of one-to-one tuition.....	231
Brian – aims and processes.....	231
Brian – the one-to-one relationship.....	233
Brian – the context of one-to-one tuition.....	234
Amanda – aims and processes.....	236
Amanda – the one-to-one relationship.....	238
Summary.....	240

### **Personal development and autonomy in learning: Lawrence (4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate), Penny (2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate) and Steve (teacher)..... 241**

Introduction.....	241
Lawrence and Penny – aims and processes.....	243
Lawrence and Penny – the one-to-one relationship.....	247
Lawrence and Penny – the context of one-to-one tuition.....	251
Steve – aims and processes.....	253
Steve – the one-to-one relationship.....	257
Steve – the context of one-to-one tuition.....	258
Summary.....	259

### **Awareness of tension between vocational apprenticeship and independence in students: Daniel (1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate) and Sally (teacher)..... 260**

Introduction.....	260
Daniel- aims and processes.....	261
Daniel – the one-to-one relationship.....	263
Daniel – the context of one-to-one tuition.....	264
Sally.....	265
Sally - aims and processes.....	266

Sally – the one-to-one relationship.....	270
Sally – the context of one-to-one tuition.....	271
Summary.....	272
<b>Discussion.....</b>	<b>273</b>
 <b>Chapter 7 – Concluding discussion.....</b>	 <b>279</b>
<b>Models of apprenticeship.....</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Teaching and learning strategies.....</b>	<b>285</b>
Strategies and structures used in one-to-one lessons.....	285
Feedback, keeping records, and planning as part of reflective practice.....	287
<b>The impact of the one-to-one relationship on learning.....</b>	<b>288</b>
The culture of anxiety.....	288
Trust and power in one-to-one tuition.....	290
Idealisation and criticism of teachers.....	291
Social interaction and the match between student and teacher perspectives.....	292
One-to-one tuition in relation to the curriculum.....	294
Group work.....	295
<b>The fundamental purposes of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning in higher education.....</b>	<b>296</b>
One-to-one tuition, and its relationship to the culture of the classical music profession.....	298
The potential of reflective and reflexive cycles.....	300
Professional education in the twenty-first century.....	304
<b>Limitations.....</b>	<b>306</b>
Size of the study.....	306
Selection of participants.....	307
Subjectivity in the research process.....	308
<b>Implications for staff development and further research.....</b>	<b>309</b>
Professional development.....	309
Creative engagement in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action.....	311

Personalised learning.....	312
Collaborative processes, and embedding professional development within artistic and educational contexts.....	313
Development of expertise in instrumental/vocal teaching and learning.....	314
Research.....	314
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>316</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Interview schedules.....</b>	<b>327</b>
Interview schedule - teachers.....	327
Interview schedule - students.....	331
<b>Appendix 2 – Sample of data from an interview transcript... </b>	<b>327</b>

# LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - The process of recursive analysis on the qualitative data.....	99
Table 2 - The demographics of the teachers .....	103
Table 3 - Different fundamental aims of the teachers.....	106
Table 4 - Strategies used by the teachers in facilitating autonomous learning.....	113
Table 5 - The use of “listening” in teachers’ conceptualisations of the aims of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning.....	120
Table 6 - Different emphases in the content of teaching expressed by the teachers.....	128
Table 7 - Teachers’ attitudes to the use of audio and video recording in learning.....	132
Table 8 - Different practices articulated by the teachers in relation to keeping records about their teaching.....	138
Table 9 - Teachers’ characterisations of the one-to-one relationship.....	140
Table 10 - Teachers’ descriptions of their social interaction with students.....	147
Table 11 - The demographics of the students.....	159
Table 12 - The professional aspirations of the students.....	165
Table 13 - Students’ descriptions of motivation from lessons.....	174
Table 14 - Lesson structures perceived by the students.....	184
Table 15 - Students’ perceptions of the focus on content in their lessons.....	185
Table 16 - Successful teaching strategies reported by the students.....	187
Table 17 - Examples where students did not communicate with their teachers about their needs.....	188
Table 18 - Students’ practices in terms of keeping notes about their lessons and individual work.....	191
Table 19 - Students’ characterisations of the teacher-student relationship.....	196

Table 20 - Students' perceptions of the boundaries around the one-to-one relationship.....	201
Table 21 - Students' characterisation of effective and less effective personal qualities involved in teaching.....	204
Table 22 - Students' perceptions of one-to-one tuition within the curriculum as a whole.....	209
Table 23 - Difficulties experienced by students in the transition to the Guildhall School.....	217



# LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 - Digital trace showing respiratory function before, during, and after playing the oboe.....	27
Fig. 2 - The range of teaching activity within the Guildhall School undertaken by the teachers in different departments.....	105
Fig. 3 - The overall professional profiles of the teachers interviewed, by department.....	105
Fig. 4 - Differences in underlying aims emphasised by the teachers, by department.....	108
Fig. 5 - Differences in underlying aims emphasised by the teachers according to gender.....	109
Fig. 6 - Differences in the emphasis on particular content in the teachers' perceptions of their teaching, by department.....	130
Fig. 7 - Teachers' descriptions of the use of audio and video recording to support learning, by department .....	133
Fig. 8 - Teachers' attitudes to keeping ongoing records about students and about their teaching.....	139
Fig. 9 - Different emphases in the teachers' characterisation of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship.....	141
Fig. 10 - Teachers reporting having difficulties with students, by department.....	145
Fig. 11 - Differences in the levels of social interaction engaged in by teachers with their students, by department.....	148
Fig. 12 - Instrumental/vocal classes taken by the teachers.....	150
Fig. 13 - The previous musical education of the students.....	162
Fig. 14 - Changes of teachers experienced by the students prior to coming to the Guildhall School, by department.....	163
Fig. 15 - Instruments previously studied by the students in addition to their principal study.....	163
Fig. 16 - The professional aspirations of the students, by department.....	166

Fig. 17 - The developing professional profiles of the students, by department.....	167
Fig. 18 - The types of notes kept by the students, by department.....	192
Fig. 19 - The distribution of students in terms of engaging in a social relationship with their teacher, by department.....	198

## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

I will never forget being asked to teach the oboe at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. A picture is etched in my mind of the chance encounter with the Head of Wind, Brass and Percussion, outside the Barbican Arts Centre. The attendant feelings of excitement, professional validation, and terror remain equally vivid. At this point in my life I had almost no experience of teaching at all, I had no training to teach, and I had only just stopped being a student in formal education. I considered myself to be an apprentice as a player, and teaching was something that I simply didn't think about. What would I do then with the two pupils, with whom I was being invited to work? In those first moments of saying 'yes', I found myself inevitably casting back for inspiration to my experiences of being taught the oboe, and what my teachers had done with me.

My experience reflects similar stories to those of fellow performing musicians, who begin to teach as part of their portfolio career, but undertake the task without any specific training. As I started this work, I was filled with self-doubt about my ability - I was so clearly not an expert player. My fear was that as a teacher and player I had many questions and few answers, and so would not be able to help my pupils. How would I manage? Where could I turn for help? As time went on, however, and I settled into it, I found myself enjoying teaching hugely – not least the contact with students which was interactive, meaningful and sustained compared with a number of my other professional

activities. The chance to explore the diverse perspectives on technique, repertoire and performing which students brought to their lessons soon meant that I began to perceive teaching as a great source of learning and inspiration.

One-to-one teaching, however, generally happens behind closed doors. No one watches what you do, and opportunities to witness others engaged in it are rare. The Guildhall School, along with other higher education institutions at the time, required no initial teaching qualifications of its newly-appointed instrumental/vocal teachers, and no ongoing professional development. There was no induction process, and consequently I remained relatively isolated as a teacher. The expectations were that I, like all my colleagues, should get on and do the job without interference or review, evaluated through the success or failure of my students.

Working in this kind of environment in some respects felt comfortable: this was the way I had learned to play myself, and I was not having to fall in with many formal procedures or processes of accountability. In essence I could teach as I liked. Yet the isolation, minimal feedback and dialogue with other teachers, and lack of professional development opportunities were also disquieting. I was working almost exclusively on the basis of trial and error within my own little world, and had little idea really about how I was getting on, or how to improve and develop my teaching.

The study reported in this thesis has emerged from these experiences. It aims to take a closer look at one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition in a conservatoire through a comparative analysis of the perceptions of teachers and students, and to map out some

of its key characteristics. As such it has arisen from a personal journey as a teacher and player. It is also, however, the product of an ongoing transformational process at the Guildhall School, which is enabling a range of teaching staff to undertake research and professional development, and which has been initiated in response to changes evident both within the music profession and higher education in the UK.

The impact of these changes has begun to stimulate conservatoires in the UK to reflect critically about their fundamental purposes, structures and processes. In 1999, aware of substantial research being developed in other conservatoires, the Guildhall School instigated a policy to fund research, professional development and curriculum initiative projects proposed by part-time teaching staff from all departments of the college. This policy needs some explanation. Unlike other conservatoires in the United Kingdom, the Guildhall School is privately funded by the Corporation of London, and is not in receipt of grants from the Higher Education Funding Council. Yet senior managers were aware that other conservatoires had become part of a national and state-funded scheme supporting research programmes, and that several had received substantial grants.

There was some flexibility within the Guildhall School in terms of the possible nature and structuring of such research, since the stringent rules, governing the national competition for limited grant funds across the whole higher education sector, did not apply. In contrast with other conservatoires, which typically employed experienced researchers to undertake research for the college, the policy at the Guildhall School was designed to encourage existing hourly-paid professorial staff to begin to undertake research or professional development projects alongside teaching and performing, and

to provide financial support for this. In many instances initial work was begun without an extensive research background, and the focus on hourly-paid teachers rather than on full-time salaried staff meant that the emphasis was placed on developing research from within the expertise of instrumental, vocal, composition and drama teachers, the majority of whom were also continuing to be professional practitioners. In this way research was embedded in practice, and could be used to inform and improve practice. Furthermore, the notion of rehearsal processes as research could be explored (Davidson, 2004), and could be extended to include the notions of teacher-student one-to-one interactions and practising as research. In order to support and monitor the quality of individual projects, external expertise was brought in to assist in the detailed design and management of the work. This proved to be an extraordinary opportunity for instrumental teachers like myself to explore and share aspects of our work as teachers and artists in more detail, and so begin to illuminate the processes of teaching and learning in which we were steeped. It was work undertaken through these opportunities that provided the impetus for the current study.

The initial work I undertook as part of the development programme at the Guildhall School consisted of two action research projects. The first related to students' preparation for recital assessments and the impact of group work in this (Gaunt, 1999). The second focused on breathing and oboe playing, and incorporated four phases: a literature review; scientific analysis of breathing in oboe playing; individual lessons and workshops with oboe students at the Guildhall School, informed by findings from the literature; and a critical evaluation of my own oboe teaching (Gaunt, 2005a). A brief report of these two research projects is given below for two reasons. Firstly some key

issues about instrumental/vocal tuition emerged which informed the research questions and design of this study. Secondly, the progress of research from a discipline-specific focus to more generic issues of teaching and learning provides an example of professional development within this field, and yields insight into the evolution of thought and changing priorities stimulated by its processes.

### **Preliminary research**

My first engagement with research was a small scale project looking at how oboe students prepared for end of year recital exams, and the potential impact of group work in this process (Gaunt, 1999). Essentially I had noticed students withdrawing more and more into themselves and their practice rooms as exams approached, whilst at the same time the quality of their playing deteriorated. I wanted to try to do something about this. I ran a series of workshops where students performed to one another, articulated their feelings and sensations in playing, and we made audio recordings of some of the performances, so that the students could listen back to themselves. Findings suggested that the group workshop sessions gave considerable support to the students, and helped to combat unproductive spirals of performance anxiety, waning self-confidence and increasing isolation, which led to performances characterised by physical tension and relatively bland expression compared with their individual abilities.

This research highlighted that breathing and breath control seemed to be key threads in influencing both the quality of playing and individual experiences of playing. Student

accounts articulated sensations of breathlessness sometimes associated with experiences of panic, feelings of not being able to keep going at the end of a phrase, or of being near collapse with the effort of keeping everything under control when playing. These accounts resonated with me as a player and teacher. An important relationship seemed to be emerging between breathing patterns and the levels of physical tension generated in playing. As this tension became more extreme and its associated breathing pattern became more laboured and shallow, so the combination was likely to trigger increasing sensations of physical discomfort and distraction from the music, spiralling into self-criticism, frustration and self-doubt. So, for example, it was relatively common to see constricted breathing in a player with a stiff, contracted posture; similarly when someone was anxious about breathing, he/she might find their ability to shape phrases was impeded; or, in contrast, when aural perception and general awareness of other colleagues in an ensemble were fine-tuned, breathing was likely to be free and easy.

## **Breathing and oboe playing**

In response to these findings, I put forward a more substantial research proposal. My intention was to investigate breathing and breath control in oboe playing, hoping to understand more about effective practices, and to explore these in relation to approaches to teaching and learning the oboe. It was my sense that breathing was a key connecting thread between different aspects of playing (such as sound quality, musical expression, freedom of movement and conviction in performance), and one which had a major impact on oboists' subjective experience of playing. Yet in terms of my own learning



experiences I had relatively little material to draw on. None of my teachers gave me specific exercises or ways of approaching breathing as far as I can remember (although this does not necessarily mean that they did not - I have kept no records). At some point I was taught to breathe out as well as in between phrases, and I do remember being told that my breathing was noisy. Breath control, however, and 'support', for example, were not explained, and whilst the diaphragm was certainly mentioned in connection with vibrato (and was seemingly important), I only ever had a rather vague idea of where it was in the body and how it worked. I wanted, therefore, to look at how players managed breath control, at their subjective experiences of breathing and playing the oboe, and at the pedagogy of breathing in oboe playing.

In order to do this, an action research model was developed, based on my own teaching. Several research methods were used, and there were four distinct elements of the research: a literature review; scientific testing of respiratory function in oboe playing; analysis of teaching and learning breathing in oboe playing over a twelve week term, and the changes in practice and understanding which oboe students experienced; and a critical evaluation of my own teaching. With such a cross-disciplinary approach, I felt this research could do justice to the complexities of breathing, its teaching and learning.

### *The literature*

The literature on breathing demonstrated that practice had not in general been underpinned by research, but rather had evolved through the transmission of existing expertise in practical one-to-one apprenticeship, together with individual experimentation to develop knowledge-in-action (Gaunt, 2004). The development of

practice in this way inevitably produced diverse approaches amongst professional players. There were conflicting opinions, for example, about how much air to breathe in before playing, the role of the diaphragm in breath control when playing, optimum length of playing without pausing to breathe, the relationship between breathing, posture and movement in playing, and the basic directions of the air flow in breathing and playing.

Different perspectives relating to breathing were usually presented forcefully, particularly in the context of a teaching handbook or pedagogical resource. However, the ideas in these texts were often developed through personal exploration of effective practice, and were therefore potentially problematic in relation to issues of teaching and learning. Expertise was based on what worked for individual players most effectively, but there was no evidence that a teacher's particular approach would work as effectively for all students. Indeed the individuality of professional flute players' breathing patterns was demonstrated by Cossette, Sliwinski et al. (2000), and these findings seemed to conflict with the more dogmatic approaches outlined in the pedagogical literature relating to oboe playing. Furthermore it was possible that whilst a particular practice was effective for a player, it was not necessarily optimally efficient in physiological terms, especially in relation to a long term career and the need to sustain effective patterns of breathing. There is much evidence that many professional players, including wind players, encounter physiological difficulties by the time they reach mid-career (Wills and Cooper, 1988; Chesky, 2004; Llobet, 2004).

The literature indicated a dominant conceptualisation of teaching and learning as apprenticeship, although this was almost never made explicit, and a world in which the transmission of practical skill remained relatively separate from its systematic review and exploration. A strong knowledge and skill base generated through personal experience seemed to be the core focus in the conceptualisation of the teaching processes. This contrasted with more recent conceptualisations of effective practice in higher education, for instance the provision of rich learning contexts as described, for example, by Ramsden (2003) or Biggs (1999).

From the literature key aspects of breathing and oboe playing which needed to be considered in relation to teaching and learning were identified. These included anatomical and physiological understanding of breathing processes in playing, awareness of breathing in playing; the relationship between breathing, posture and movement; the physical and metaphorical links between breathing and musical pulse and shape, and the connections between breathing and performance. Within these areas specific teaching and learning strategies and exercises were distilled from the literature and my own existing knowledge base, to form an initial teaching toolkit which could be evaluated in practice.

### *The perspective of scientific analysis*

Laboratory testing of breathing and oboe playing was undertaken to compare the evidence derived from scientific analysis with findings from the literature (Gaunt, submitted (a)). Four oboe students at the Guildhall School were participants. The testing was set up in collaboration with a respiratory physiologist at Imperial College, London.

Data were gathered relating to the volumes of air inspired and expired before, during and after playing, and concurrent changes in blood chemistry and heart rate.<sup>1</sup> Digital traces showed how these measurements changed over time whilst each participant was playing. A typical example is shown in figure 1. These data provided individual feedback to the participants about their breathing practices and were used to inform discussion about the relationship between empirical measurements and participants' subjective perceptions. This demonstrated that, as with the study of professional flute players (Cossette, Sliwinski et al., 2000), individual breathing practices in oboe playing varied considerably between participants, for example in terms of the number of breaths taken during a particular piece of music, and the recruitment of different breathing muscles. This evidence conflicted with some of the more dogmatic approaches taken in the literature on breathing in oboe playing, but usefully began to generate a detailed picture from a more neutral perspective than that of a performer-teacher. In particular important links were made between breathing, physical tension and the sensations of discomfort which participants experienced while playing.

Some aspects of the scientific analysis were common to all the participants, such as the relationship between the lengths of phrases played on the oboe without pausing to

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<sup>1</sup> Breathing frequency and relative changes in lung volume were determined using respiratory inductance plethysmography (RIP, Morgan Medical). Measurements of the vital capacity were determined using a rolling-seal spirometer. Estimates of the changes in lung volume relative to the vital capacity were determined by recording the RIP signal during the period of playing. Arterial oxygen saturation (SaO<sub>2</sub>) was determined using a pulse oxymeter (Ohmeda, 3700) with the transducer attached to the ear lobe. The end-tidal partial pressure of carbon dioxide (PETCO<sub>2</sub>) was used as an estimate of the partial pressure of carbon dioxide in the arterial blood. Respired gas was continuously sampled through a small polythene tube placed at the entrance to one nostril. The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in this sample of gas was determined using a rapidly responding infra-red analyser (AEI Technology); from this the maximum concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> at end-expiration (end-tidal PCO<sub>2</sub>) was determined. Continuous, non-invasive measurements of arterial blood pressure were obtained using a servo-controlled plethysmograph (Finapres, Ohmeda). For this measurement, a cuff is placed around the index finger.

breathe, and changes to blood chemistry in terms of the saturation of oxygen and carbon dioxide. When playing, fewer breaths were taken than during a period of rest. This meant that oxygen levels decreased and carbon dioxide levels increased during each out-breath used to blow. Furthermore, the relationship between blood chemistry and the lengths of phrases played was also shown to relate to the sensation reported by participants of an urge to breathe in, which tended both to be a distracting influence and to be associated with uncomfortable physical sensations of tension.

There was a tendency with all the participants to take a large in-breath before playing, even though they then exhaled the air only very slowly during playing, and therefore required a sharp out-breath at any pause point before fresh air could be inhaled. In this sense the participants did not match the in-breath to the musical requirements of the phrase. They also reported that, contrary to the implications of the changes in blood chemistry, they did not tend to plan their breathing to find an optimum balance between physiological and musical demands.

Taking a large in-breath before each phrase of playing was significant in other respects too. Semi-holding the breath whilst playing required considerable physical effort in resisting the natural recoil of the lungs. In addition, playing the oboe required a relatively high air pressure to generate sound compared with other woodwind instruments. As players experienced higher degrees of physical tension and discomfort, they tended to lose musical focus and started to take extra pause points, but only for a quick gasping in-breath which did not in fact address the underlying problem of “blowing off” the excess carbon dioxide in the blood, or relieving physical tension.

Combined with the build up of carbon dioxide in the blood and the consequent urge to breathe in, these quick breaths seemed to contribute to the increasing physical tension and discomfort whilst playing reported by the participants. There were therefore cycles of increasing tension derived from a number of sources relating reciprocally to breathing.

In addition, the students reported considerable degrees of anxiety in relation to their playing, and breathing in particular, worrying for example that they would not be able to keep going or control the breath. The large in-breath before playing may also have reflected this anxiety, urgency, and effort to manage the breathing, the opposite in fact of the desired approach identified in the literature of an exuberant, expressive out-breath followed by a more automatic, and not necessarily large in-breath (Koch, 1990; Canter, 1997; Sanders, 2002a; Sanders, 2002b). The results of intensive concentration on achieving an elusive goal over long periods of time were perhaps therefore evident in the large in-breath and the lack of connection between breath and musical dimensions. A typical example of this is shown in fig.1, where the digital traces show the size of in-breaths and the use of lung and abdominal volumes during playing.

### ***Action research with oboe students at the Guildhall School***

The research on breathing and oboe playing included work which centred upon my own oboe teaching and the ways in which oboe students at the Guildhall School developed their breath control in playing (Gaunt, submitted (b)). Over the course of a single conservatoire term of twelve weeks, breathing was made a particular focus of my

teaching, and the usual programme of one-to-one lessons was extended to include seminars and group workshops, and input from an Alexander Technique specialist. Through this extended programme of teaching, a range of knowledge and skills were introduced to reflect the findings from the literature review and the teaching toolbox developed from it. Data were gathered relating to two key areas. The first focused on the ways in which the student participants' breathing practices changed over the period of the research. At the beginning of the teaching programme, a video recording was made of each student performing, and an interview was undertaken to gather data about the student's perceptions of breathing and oboe playing, particularly in response to the video recording. At the end of the teaching programme, a second video recording was made of the student performing, and a second interview was undertaken, to reflect on the teaching interventions and changes made in the student's individual practice in breathing and oboe playing. The second area of data collection related to my own practice as an oboe teacher. This involved an ongoing process of systematic self-reflection throughout the research, and was facilitated by a number of different

Fig. 1 Digital trace showing respiratory function before, during and after playing the oboe

DIAGRAM REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Arterial oxygen  
saturation

Vital capacity

Summed rib  
abdominal

Expiratory

Ribcage volume

Abdominal

End tidal  
pressure of  
dioxide (mmHg)

er  
ally

Before playing

During playing - Ferling  
study no.1

Recovery period after  
playing



critical perspectives, including my own journal notes relating to the different aspects of the research, and discussion with a critical friend who observed some of the workshops and one-to-one sessions.

***The relationship between anxiety, breathing and physical tension in the action research***

In the teaching and learning programme, a relationship was established between tension in playing and underlying approaches to playing and learning. Initially physical tension was identified by participants, and their awareness of their breathing processes tended to be generalised and reactive to these sensations of discomfort. Some of them wanted to be more proactive about their breathing practices, but indicated that they did not know how to do this. Whilst they could identify sensations of discomfort, they were unable to be more specific, for example about where in the body these sensations were, and they struggled to analyse their experiences in any detail. They suggested that in fact the experience of physical tension and associated discomfort in playing was itself a source of distraction, making it difficult to maintain focus and concentration. This contributed to the lack of specific awareness of breathing patterns, and seemed to reflect a disconnection from inner expressive impulses and sense of physical poise. In this situation, there was a tendency to abandon these inner impulses in favour of being guided more exclusively by external factors, such as crafting a particular musical style. This underlined the significance of self-confidence and self-awareness in playing, and the potential for these to be lost in tuition at this level (Gaunt, 2005a).

By the end of the research some of the students were beginning to realise that physical tension and lack of awareness of breathing also related to their underlying experiences of fear and anxiety about their playing and development. Most were filled with fear both as they played, and as they considered their playing and development. In this sense, both their reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action were characterised by high levels of anxiety. This contributed to vicious circles within their learning. As a result, it became clear that discovering less anxious and more self-supporting and creative cycles of interlinked reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schon, 1983; Schon, 1987) was a critical concern for the participants. Through the process of the research they all managed this to some degree, creating more constructive and self-confident learning cycles.

In this way a connection was established between developing more specific awareness of breathing patterns in playing and generating more productive self-observation and critical reflection, and a more positive, less anxious, overall approach to playing. For example, some students found that they could use breathing exercises and simply focus on their breathing to set up less panicky approaches to practising. Some also began to realise the real impact of their responses to the stresses of playing, and were able to begin to work on transforming these.

### ***Roles in the one-to-one student-teacher relationship***

The teaching work with the students demonstrated that most participants were used to taking a passive, reactive role in lessons. As one student characterised it, there was an expectation of a doctor-patient relationship with the students waiting to be

given the remedies for their difficulties. Most did not expect to think for themselves, and several seemed reluctant to take responsibility for their own learning. This may in fact have exacerbated the anxiety in their approach, as the lack of responsibility made autonomous engagement in their music-making difficult, and perhaps detracted from intrinsic motivation. The significance of intrinsic motivation and music being at the heart of self-concept in the success of student musicians moving into the profession has been demonstrated by Burland and Davidson (2004).

### ***Critical evaluation of my teaching***

Following the teaching and learning work with the students, a critical analysis of my own teaching and one-to-one interactions with students indicated that my own knowledge and commitment to the physical processes of playing sometimes obscured and problematised student learning, particularly in this one-to-one context. Although I was dedicated to the idea of students being active, autonomous learners, my teaching did not promote this effectively, but tended to follow a model of transmission. The attention to detail and ongoing attempts to help individual students solve their difficulties which produced lots of information and complex ideas, in fact generated an environment which could be overwhelming and threatening for a student, as was the case with one particular student who went through a process of rejecting the research and my teaching, although she later re-established the relationship on a different and more detached basis.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This particular case was an interesting example where it appeared that the teaching interactions became too close, with the teacher looking for change of a kind, or at a rate, which could not be tolerated by the student. When the relationship was re-established, the student seemed to be acknowledging that change needed to take place, but was careful to take the initiative in establishing the boundaries and making the process one which could be effective. The difficulties experienced here were resonant with some of the analysis of one-to-one tuition, and the ways in which students find ways of coping with it, made in an evaluation of students' approaches to learning in a conservatoire (Kushner, S. (2000), Personalising evaluation, London, Sage.)

### ***Implications***

A wide range of knowledge, beyond the personal knowing-in-action of an individual performer was shown to be important in meeting the needs of the students, who responded in different ways to the diverse learning contexts offered through the scientific analysis of breathing, seminars on anatomy and physiology, practical workshops, input from the Alexander Technique specialist, and one-to-one lessons. This indicated that teachers needed repertoires of ways to explain and engage students in relation to breathing in oboe playing. In my own teaching the widest range of strategies and exercises were used in the group sessions. In the one-to-one lessons I realised that I may not have adopted significantly different approaches when working with different students.

### ***Feedback, reflective practice, and the power of peer learning***

Whilst debilitating self-criticism and low self-confidence in learning seemed to characterise many of the students' experiences, and related in part to the dynamics of the one-to-one relationship, aspects of the research process seemed to be constructive in generating more positive patterns in their approaches to learning. The students' previous experiences of feedback seemed to have been focused on corrective instructions. More neutral processes of feedback such as audio and video recording were rarely used. The data from the scientific analysis was presented in the form of digital traces of the measurements made over the duration of a period of playing, and this provided unmediated feedback, which was not so bound up with the individual, the teacher and their relationship. Likewise, video recording was more direct, and participants could develop their own interpretations, which in turn

helped to promote responsibility and self-confidence in learning, and in reducing anxiety.

Collaborative work was also a significant factor in the discovery of more productive learning processes. Sharing experiences and knowledge made the learning process richer, and helped to break the isolation of students feeling that they were locked into their own practice world, as well as being a means of exposing students to a greater variety of input and ideas. Interaction with others brought more diverse perspectives into play for each individual, creative engagement in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, and seemed to reduce levels of self-criticism and fear. It was hard, however, for the students to trust the support of their peer group, and paradoxically they generally expressed a desire for more one-to-one sessions.

### **The characteristics of one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition**

The findings from the research into breathing and oboe playing, and the development of my own teaching through the research processes, provided the motivation for the study reported in this thesis. I wanted to illuminate further aspects of instrumental and vocal tuition in a conservatoire generic to different instrument and voice disciplines, particularly in relation to one-to-one tuition, which as Duke, Flowers et al. described has a long and rich tradition which has led to “deeply held convictions about the purposes, benefits, and substance of private music study” (1997: 51). Like breathing and oboe playing this was a field characterised by relatively little research evidence, but plenty of anecdote and strong opinion. The need for research in this area was evident (Madsen, 1988; Yarborough, 1996;

Kennell, 2002), not least because one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition has been a core learning process for nearly all classical musicians, performers and music educators alike, and has an important impact on their practices and ways of perceiving their work. It was clear, however, that bringing a research lens to the world of instrumental/vocal teaching in a conservatoire beyond my own practice would raise complex and delicate issues. In pursuing questions, especially about the characteristics of effective practice in one-to-one tuition, it would be vital to win the confidence and interest of the teachers and students with whom I would engage, if the research was to produce valid and reliable findings and be sustainable beyond an initial pilot stage.

Despite possible difficulties, I was spurred on by the sense that research could make an important contribution to the consideration of effective instrumental and vocal teaching and learning in higher education, and to growing debates about the kind of education and training which conservatoires provide for musicians in the twenty-first century. For example, I was aware of increasing pressures on conservatoires to adapt to ongoing changes in the music profession, and therefore to articulate and justify their aims, educational strategies and use of funding. The British Government's White Paper on higher education challenged the need for premium funding in conservatoires to cover one-to-one tuition (2003); Youth Music's report *Creating a Land with Music* called for educators to rethink the nature of appropriate curricula for the training of musicians, drawing attention to the pace of change within the music profession and the consequent demands made on musicians (2002).

One-to-one teaching and learning, however, remained the hub of conservatoire practice. It provided the rationale for premium funding, and was generally perceived within conservatoires to form the core of effective teaching and learning. Whilst it was evident that the traditions of one-to-one teaching and learning were underpinned by valuable knowledge and experience, nevertheless adaptability and engagement with change were also clearly crucial to a vibrant and sustainable musical future. Systematic evidence beyond anecdote of the processes of one-to-one instrumental teaching, its efficacy and limitations, was much needed, and could be used to inform responses to ongoing developments in the music profession, and the promotion of viable future directions for instrumental teaching and learning.

The dangers of not doing this were considerable. Jonathan Sacks, discussing the context of increasing cultural diversity, eloquently underlined the destructive potential of remaining static:

Bad things happen when the pace of change exceeds our ability to change, and events move faster than our understanding. It is then that we feel the loss of control over our lives. Anxiety creates fear, fear leads to anger, anger breeds violence, and violence – when combined with weapons of mass destruction – becomes a deadly reality (2002: 2).

These issues had an important impact on the design of my own research, both in terms of the questions and methodologies which would be most effective in illuminating practice without alienating practitioners, and the questions and methodologies which might be able to contribute constructively to developmental processes within a conservatoire. The idea of insider research conducted through participatory and collaborative processes was an immediately attractive and viable option, given my position within the institution, although there were clear

limitations and difficulties, for example in establishing the validity and reliability of such work.

## **Aims**

The aims of this study were to further knowledge and understanding of instrumental and vocal teaching and learning in higher education particularly in relation to one-to-one tuition. The research questions addressed were:

1. How is the one-to-one relationship in instrumental and vocal tuition in higher education conceptualised?
2. What particular strategies and techniques characterise effective and less effective teaching and learning relationships?

## ***Thesis structure***

The next chapter presents a literature review, focusing on instrumental/vocal teaching and learning in higher education, and considering conceptualisations of related aspects of teaching and learning in higher education and one-to-one tuition in particular. This is followed by a methodology chapter covering the conceptual framework and methods used in the field work. The findings chapters begin with an analysis of interviews with instrumental/vocal teachers at the Guildhall School. Chapter 5 considers data from interviews with some of their students at the Guildhall School, and chapter 6 presents an analysis of the working relationships in several teacher-student pairs. The final chapter presents the concluding discussion, and considers the limitations and implications of this study.



## **CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW OF INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The making of a performing musician in the West is the result of events that transpire between student and teacher in the privacy of the studio lesson.....Teachers are the musical agents, the models, and the motivating forces for their students (Campbell, 1991: 276).

This chapter presents a review of literature relating to one-to-one instrumental and vocal teaching in higher education. The emphasis is on how one-to-one tuition in this field has been conceptualized, particularly in terms of the impact of the one-to-one relationship itself.

### **The scope of research in instrumental and vocal teaching in higher education**

The value and centrality of one-to-one teaching in a musician's training has often been echoed (Alexander and Dorrow, 1983; Bloom, 1985; Howe and Sloboda, 1991; Persson, 1996; Duke, Flowers et al., 1997). For the most part it has remained the key element of conservatoire training, although an increasing number of studies have suggested that small group teaching with school-age children is at least as effective as individual tuition with beginners (Jackson, 1980; Griffiths, 2004), and particularly with

less able students (Seipp, 1976). One-to-one tuition, however, has been relatively uncharted in terms of research (Madsen, 1988; Schmidt, 1989; Yarborough, 1996; Duke, Flowers et al., 1997; Siebenaler, 1997; Kennell, 2002), especially in higher education. Operating to a large extent behind closed doors, research access to the one-to-one teaching environment raises complex educational and ethical issues, and data has perhaps therefore been scarce. Gaining access to this teaching environment in order to gather research data, even relating to teachers' perceptions of their work, has been reported to be difficult (L'Hommidieu, 1992; Mauleon, 2004).

More research has been undertaken in the area of school level teaching. This has considered a variety of aspects including individual accounts of particular influences on instrumental learning (Howe and Sloboda, 1991); effective practices in instrumental teaching (including comparisons between one-to-one and group learning (Griffiths, 2004); the conceptualisation of instrumental teaching (Hallam, 1998); and the nature of relationships between teacher, student and parental figures (Creech and Hallam, 2003). Whilst evidence from this work may shed light on some aspects of higher education, it is also significant that when Mills and Smith (2003) questioned instrumental teachers working for local authorities, they found that the teachers' perceptions of effective instrumental teaching in schools and conservatoires were significantly different; for example they considered that at undergraduate level in a conservatoire, teachers could take a more disciplined approach and did not need to work so hard at making lessons fun.

Perhaps there has been an implicit expectation that teachers in higher education, who are masters in their own instrumental and performing field, must be experts, and do not therefore need research evidence to underpin practice. Persson (1996) referred to *commonsense* instrumental teaching in a university setting in the UK, intimating that a natural extension of high-level playing was the training of the next generation of performers. In his observational study he applauded the teacher's intuitive ability to approach issues of interpretation effectively, but he was also openly critical of the lack of a progressive teaching approach and of the negative assessment of students' potential.

Persson's suggestion of shortcomings in instrumental teaching processes has been echoed more widely in relation to higher education as a whole. Ramsden, looking at teaching across the whole spectrum of higher education, was adamant that the age of "impeccable instruction" was only ever the case in academic mythology. He celebrated many excellent aspects of teaching, but also pointed to a great deal "that has always been frankly bad" (2003: 5). Schwartz and Webb viewed teaching in universities from the point of view of the isolation which teachers experience and its inevitable consequences:

From our observation of teachers in higher education over many years, sustained and analytical discussion concerning what happens in the classroom is notable by its absence. Many teachers that we know comment on the fact that they seldom discuss teaching with their colleagues and rarely if ever meet teachers from other departments. Teachers tell us how they are frightened to describe or discuss openly what they do and what happens in their classrooms. Often they are afraid that they are doing things "wrongly", that their lack of teaching expertise or knowledge will be exposed and they will be "found out" (Schwartz and Webb, 1993: 17).

This perspective could equally apply to conservatoires, and reinforces the need for illumination relating to teaching and learning in this one-to-one environment.

Research in a conservatoire context highlighted an important contrast between the perceptions of instrumental teachers of their own skills as teachers (Mills, 2004), and the expectations of students at the same college from their instrumental teachers (Mills, 2002). Most of the teachers whom Mills interviewed were also professional performers. They perceived themselves as committed teachers, but as ‘accomplished novices’ rather than ‘answer-filled experts’, and emphasised that they felt teaching improved their own effectiveness as performers (2004). Undergraduates at the same college were asked to identify key characteristics they felt were important in a principal study lesson (Mills, 2002: 2):

Students want to feel that they have made good progress with their technique, musicality, practising skills and confidence, and they want inspiring teachers who love teaching, show interest in students’ musical and personal development, are firm when necessary, and who present detailed criticism constructively. They want their lessons to take place regularly, and to feel planned and purposeful.

Here the students articulated multiple dimensions of learning. In addition to technical, instrumental skill and musical development, they identified psychological dimensions of being a performer, a range of skills associated with effective practising, critical skills involved in feedback appropriate to an individual’s needs, and aspects of planning and lifelong skills for self-managing a career in professional music. However, the extent to which the commitment and motivation of the teachers, together with their technical skill and musical artistry as performers met these complex interweaving needs of the students was not addressed in this study. Were the students’ needs met through one-to-

one tuition, and how did this environment particularly support their learning, or hinder it? Were some of the students' needs met in other contexts? Which aspects of learning articulated by the students did these teachers particularly facilitate, and which were addressed least effectively?

Some aspects of the interactions in one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition have been investigated, albeit in contexts within higher education other than conservatoires, and have employed diverse research paradigms and methodologies. Topics considered have included student participation and musical development in lessons (Burwell, 2003; Burwell, Pickup et al., 2003); the sequence and pace of lessons (L'Hommidieu, 1992; Duke, Prickett et al., 1998); the nature of teacher feedback and instructions to students, and student attentiveness (Jones, 1975; Kostka, 1984; Jorgensen, 1986; Siebenaler, 1997); teacher modelling (Rosenthal, 1984; Schon, 1987; Gholson, 1998); self-teaching or practising (Bernstein, 1981; Lehmann, 1997; Lehmann, 1997; Wilding and Valentine, 1997; Hallam, 1997a; Hallam, 1997b; Williamon, 2002), and the relationship between teacher and students (Hepler, 1986; Schmidt, 1989; Donovan, 1994). These are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

### ***Interaction in lessons***

#### **Proportions of teacher and student talk, performance without specific purpose**

Burwell, Pickup et al. (2003) analysed video recordings of instrumental teaching in a university in the UK, charting instances of particular teaching strategies, and investigating, for example, proportions of verbal interaction between teacher and

student. Their findings provided an important comparison with the perspective of student needs outlined by Mills (2002). In looking at actual lessons as well as perceptions of teachers and students they found less positive characteristics, for example low proportions of time taken up by the student talking or asking questions, high proportions of time taken up by students performing but without specific aims or feedback (this was corroborated by Schmidt (1989) in the USA).<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the differences in these findings reflected a difference in the quality of the teaching and ability of the students in the two studies. However, they could also be indicative of divergences between student needs on the one hand, and the evidence of teaching interactions, and what was reported by teachers and students on the other hand. Mills did not discuss the significance of the one-to-one relationship between teacher and student, and the potential of a “halo effect” which this could create, as described by Abeles (1975), colouring student perceptions of their teacher. Similarly, Maidlow described the “powerful influence” of instrumental teachers on their students, and found that music students in the UK tended to nominate their teachers as “influential, supportive and even as the musician they most admired” (Maidlow, 1998).

### Learning to interpret music

Several European studies revealed strong evidence of the prime aim in lessons being to transmit a body of musical knowledge and instrumental/vocal skill (Persson, 1996;

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<sup>1</sup> These findings were also complemented by Ward with school-level students. Investigating the effect of techniques for analysing music in instrumental lessons, she found that the most frequent focus of events for her sample included, for example, ‘episodes of student play which lacked a specific purpose and non-specific evaluation and feedback from the teacher’ (Ward, V. (2003), Actual and perceived effects of the use of analytical techniques within instrumental lessons, PALATINE study day, Christ Church University College, Canterbury.)

Burwell, Pickup et al., 2003; Ward, 2003). Burwell, however, discussed musical interpretation in relation to approaches to teaching, and demonstrated that this aspect of the core business of transmission, was in fact more closely related to musical independence and therefore to students' approaches to learning than it was to a body of knowledge. She found that whilst students considered interpretation to involve the performer's individuality and personal input, their contribution in dialogue about interpretation was minimal (13%), a drop from their overall average contribution of 17%. In uncovering these discrepancies between student perceptions and the actual content of lessons, she questioned whether, in fact, students felt that interpretation could be taught (Burwell, 2003: 7-10). She suggested that interpretation, in practice, relied on individual confidence and autonomy in learning, since these underpinned the projection of expression in performance. She gave an example of a lesson where a student slowly made choices about dynamics and shape in a piece through playing and reflecting supported by the teacher, and then concluded:

We cannot tell, from the transcript alone, whether the student's "playing around" makes for a superior performance; but it does seem likely that this shared approach would, over time, help to build her confidence and independence (Burwell, 2003: 12).

Furthermore, in comparing the use of different approaches to teaching interpretation with higher and lower achieving pupils, Burwell showed that more specific work, looking at textual details and appealing largely to the intellect rose for the higher achievers, whereas more general abstract or metaphorical approaches (from which a student might more easily extrapolate for autonomous work later), all fell for the higher achievers and rose for the lower achievers (Burwell, 2003: 16). The implication that the

higher achievers tended to receive more specific tuition aimed at transmission compared with lower achievers who received approaches more likely to stimulate autonomous learning, was made tentatively and needs corroboration. It brought, however, an interesting insight to another tentative suggestion made by Mills (2002), that conservatoire students (who must all be instrumentally high achievers) might become less analytical about their learning through the undergraduate years. Was it possible that the teaching they received did not in fact effectively encourage extrapolation from the immediate musical text in hand to the building of autonomous learning skills?

#### Sequence and pace of lessons

In the U.S.A. L'Hommidieu conducted an observational study of three master teachers who were giving one-to-one instrumental tuition to exceptionally talented university students. She found that almost all lessons followed a similar structure, moving from technical exercises to studies to solo repertoire and/or orchestral extracts. The teachers described their approach as one of treating the students as professionals, with all the attendant expectations. The students generally exhibited high levels of preparation, and the pace of the lessons was therefore dictated by musical and technical issues and difficulties which arose. As one teacher characterised the interaction: "I often think of a lesson as if I were conducting a rehearsal with one person" (L'Hommidieu, 1992: 275).

In another observational study (this covered a variety of group teaching contexts rather than one-to-one tuition), Duke, Prickett et al., also used the analogy of a rehearsal in conceptualising effective teaching, in this instance concluding that a fast-paced



rehearsal with generally brief performance episodes and brief periods of teacher intervention was the most effective (Duke, Prickett et al., 1998). They argued that it was the rate of the alternation of these activities, rather than their overall length which distinguished effective music teaching.

#### Student attentiveness and corrective feedback

In the U.S.A., in a study looking at one-to-one piano lessons across a range of student ages, Kostka (1984) identified three significant variables in effective piano teaching: student attentiveness, time-use particularly in relation to interruptions in music-making and associated off-task behaviour, and teacher reinforcement. She found that student attentiveness was high, even though the ratio of teacher disapproval/approval of students was high compared to the 20/80% demonstrated in previous literature to be most effective for maintaining student attentiveness in class work. This in itself seemed to provide a strong case for one-to-one instrumental tuition, although she also found that interruptions of student playing were most often followed by disapproval, and she questioned the effects of such interruptions on student attitude and achievement.

Siebenaler analysed teacher-student interactions in piano lessons with a range of students, from children to adults. He summarised the findings:

In the lessons judged to be the most effective, the student played less and the teacher participated more. The teachers who were rated as more effective provided descriptive Disapproval. Students were told specifically what needed to be corrected and were given strategies for improvement. Effective lessons contained very brief Directives, teacher modelling, and successful student performance. The instructional pace included more frequent teacher-student interaction..... (Siebenaler, 1997: 19)

The evidence from Kostka and Siebenaler suggested that in the one-to-one lesson student attentiveness could be sustained with less participation by the student and more negative feedback from the teacher than in other learning environments. Whilst Siebenaler indicated that previous studies had confirmed the positive effect of student participation on attentiveness (these were all in group settings), his study suggested that the extent of student participation was not directly proportional to achievement in the one-to-one lessons (Siebenaler, 1997: 17). However, the measures he used included time spent playing without interruption in the lesson as well as episodes of interaction between teacher and student, and by his own account there was a tendency for supposedly less effective teachers to allow their students to play for longer periods without intervening or making comment. This corresponded with Burwell, Pickup et al.'s comments on the high proportion of time spent in student performance without specific aims or feedback.

Siebenaler also suggested that student inactivity and corresponding teacher activity related positively to the rankings of teacher-effectiveness as made by ten experts who observed the lessons. However, whilst the 'expert' judges agreed about the most ineffective teachers, they did not agree about the most effective teachers, and each made their decisions on the basis of different measures (Siebenaler, 1997: 14-15). As Duke, Flowers et al. pointed out, the discrepancy of views amongst music teachers (including one-to-one instrumental/vocal teachers) about the value of different approaches to teaching is well known, and made the task of identifying expert teachers difficult (1997: 52-3). Furthermore, the measures of student achievement used in Siebenaler's study

related to how students performed within the lesson, and were not compared with their performance beyond this particular dynamic, when the longer-term internalisation of the learning without the immediate support of the teacher would become apparent.

### Teacher modelling

In the U.S.A., Rosenthal worked with advanced tertiary level instrumentalists and highlighted the power of modelling as a key teaching strategy in promoting accurate performance. She compared the relative effects of guided model, model only, guide only and practice only in the preparation, over ten minutes, of a previously unseen piece of music. The most accurate performances came from the students who had been given a model only preparation tape, and it seemed that the verbal guide only tape might in fact have detracted from students' performance. She did, however, acknowledge that whilst the efficacy of modelling was clear, this study did not consider its long term effects on student performance in terms of "performance accuracy, stylistic development, ability to transfer performance skills, and cognitive understanding of musical elements" (Rosenthal, 1984: 272). There is no research evidence relating to how the process of teacher modelling for a student affects short and long term learning, including level of performance, motivation and student autonomy. This may be significant in the context of some of the potential limitations of one-to-one teaching in terms of autonomy raised by Mills and Burwell.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Such limitations may be supported by evidence such as Duke, Flowers and Wolfe who pointed to discrepancies between students' indications of what they enjoyed playing and teachers' and parents' perceptions of what the students enjoy playing most. (Duke, R. A., Flowers, P. J. et al. (1997). "Children who study piano with excellent teachers in the United States." Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education 132: 51-84.)

An analysis of a pianist's modelling for an advanced student was made by Schon as an example of reflective practice (1987: 175-216). Three critical features were established in the coaching process: the context was the student's attempts to design or produce work; it involved action as well as words; it involved reciprocal reflection-in-action. These three elements needed to be evenly distributed for the interaction to be effective. Schon identified elements of the interaction which reflected these:

Franz' interventions are multimedia performances in which he coordinates playing, gesturing talking, and singing (syllables or words) to communicate musical features of particular passages and concretize such abstract terms as phrasing (1987: 204).

He also drew attention to the smooth transitions which were made, for example from the teacher talking over his own playing, to the student playing, and then to the teacher then talking over the student's playing.

Significantly, however, whilst both players were involved to some degree in reflection-in-action through the masterclass, the reflection actually seemed to be based on an understanding of the piece of music which was one that the teacher already had in mind. The reflection and modelling involved were predominantly keyed into the transmission of this interpretation, rather than into developing the student's own ideas. The engagement of the student was on the teacher's terms. The teacher used the masterclass environment to reflect on and re-create the interpretation for the student, and essentially the student was a passive recipient of this process, imitating to achieve the same effects. The reciprocity of the reflection-in-action did not extend into the design of the interpretation, only into the means with which the interpretation might be realised. As a

result, the student was able, according to Schon, to play the piece better, with more feeling. There was no consideration, however, of how much the student internalised, whether he could reproduce the interpretation again without the teacher present, and whether he had engaged creatively in the development of his own interpretation. Similar strengths and potential weaknesses of modelling were therefore demonstrated to those in Kostka's study.

In an observational study of the teaching practice at the University of Cincinnati of an expert violinist, Dorothy Delay, Gholson (1998) characterised the interactions in lessons as conversational rather than didactic, and made turn-taking in lessons the unit of data for her observational analysis. She then theorised the relationship not as apprenticeship, but in terms of mentoring, or Vygotsky's proximal positioning, and she identified five thematic threads which contributed to the efficacy of the interactions: high levels of functioning in both teacher and student; reciprocity through mutual feedback; developmental cycles; a protective and nurturing context; and the benefit of the relationship to both participants. This study was significant in moving away from theories of transmission or apprenticeship, to emphasise the reciprocity of the relationship, particularly mutual feedback, and the importance of this benefit to the teacher as well as the student. How the teacher perceived this benefit was not, however, explained.

### *The relationship between teacher and student*

The relationship which develops between a teacher and student has been perceived to be integral to student learning. It could be considered from a range of perspectives including those of cognitive behaviourism and psychoanalytic theory. Existing research has, however, tended to focus on aspects of personality types (Rosenthal, 1984; Hepler, 1986; Schmidt, 1989; Donovan, 1994), perhaps because these are more immediately identifiable and measurable.

Schmidt (1989) hypothesized that individual personalities played a particularly crucial role in one-to-one teaching, as the student-teacher interaction here was the sine qua non of the instruction. He then analysed the relationship between personality traits and teacher behaviours, and found that personality traits were significantly related to approvals, rate of reinforcement, teacher modelling or performing, and pace in a lesson, but were not significantly related to disapproval, teacher amount of talk or questioning strategies. So, for example, extrovert characters seemed to apply a more interactive teaching style with plenty of pace and approval of the student, and an ease in communication skills. Schmidt concluded that further research needed to be done to clarify and refine theories relating teacher behaviours to teaching effectiveness.

Acknowledging that “the mode of transferral of applied musical knowledge from teacher to student is often difficult to define and describe” (Donovan, 1994: 2), Donovan used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to identify personality traits which



contributed to effective one-to-one teaching relationships. The participants for her study were university students in Mississippi and California who were all taking instrumental lessons as part of their major performing medium. She found that students with extrovert teachers did better than those with introvert teachers, and that dissimilar personality types worked best in a one-to-one teaching pair. The personality type of the student seemed to be less important than the combination of the student-teacher types. Musicality and interpretation were affected by the degree of extroversion/introversion of the teacher; both introvert and extrovert students showed more progress with extrovert teachers. She indicated the importance of distinguishing between personality traits and teaching style, but suggested that the personalities of both teacher and student might well affect teaching style, and concluded that awareness of individual communication methods would enhance teaching. Both these studies, however, were highly specific, and investigated one particular variable within the teaching environment, personality, without relating this to other aspects of the learning environment.

### ***Practising***

Practising, whilst usually considered separately from tuition, nevertheless has an important relationship to one-to-one lessons, both in terms of the input a teacher may have into the content and structuring of practice, and in how the student relates to him/herself as a self-teacher. A number of studies have tackled the processes involved in practising, and how they contribute to expertise as a musician evolves, although the relationships between lesson interaction and practising have not been directly studied.

Hallam defined practising as “that which achieves the desired end-product, in as short a time as possible, without interfering negatively with longer-term goals” (1997b: 181). The implications of such a definition suggested both that there might be many different forms of effective practice, and that either metacognitive skills, or support in the case of less experienced players, would play a significant role in bringing the tasks to completion. In trying to establish what might constitute effective practice, Hallam looked at the practice strategies employed by professional musicians, in an interview study (Hallam, 1997a).<sup>3</sup> She found that they demonstrated in particular extensive metacognitive skills in relation to awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, knowledge of the different tasks required, and a range of strategies with which to respond to their needs. The study confirmed that the musicians did learn to learn, and that they employed diverse approaches to practice. However, other studies have shown that musicians are not always aware of their own practising techniques (Chaffin and Imreh, 2001), and Mills suggested that this could be in part attributed to the deeply engrained notions of what should be practised, and in what order, learned through years of study with different teachers (Mills, 2005). Some of these differences might relate to ages and stages of instrumental learning, but in general as students become more advanced Hallam concluded that:

Teachers can begin to demonstrate some of the processes underlying effective practice, e.g. obtaining an overview of the work, identifying difficulties, selecting appropriate strategies, working on sections, integrating them into a whole, monitoring progress,

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<sup>3</sup> With shrinking opportunities for professional classical musicians, and debate about employability and relevant skills (Renshaw, P. (2005), "Connecting conversations: the changing voice of the artist", New Practices: New Pedagogies, M. Miles. London, Routledge: 99-116)., questions about the nature of effective practice and how this might be measured through the instrumental ability of musicians, reflective skill and autonomy as learners and professional artists perhaps need to be reopened.



setting goals, and evaluating (1997a: 104).

Hallam also recommended that advanced students should be encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, and that music institutions could usefully set up classes to facilitate discussion about approaches to practice. Undoubtedly this could have an important effect on conservatoire students given the amount of time dedicated to individual practice at this level, and the notion of practice as self-teaching (Jorgensen, 1995). However, Jorgensen found that 40% of students entering the Norwegian State Academy felt they had had little input from teachers in how to practise (Jorgensen, 1995), although a significant disjunction has also been reported between the ways in which teachers and students reported discussion in lessons about how to practise (Hallam, 1997b).

Both Jorgensen and Hallam showed that the way musicians practise was not homogenous, but was affected by individual learning preferences and the particular task in hand. Jorgensen's study of students' use of practice time at the Norwegian State Academy of Music (1997) demonstrated that these differences were not mediated by curriculum expectations, but included a complex set of interrelated factors including the instrument played, the expectations of the particular instrumental and musical tradition, the expectations of the student's teacher, career aspirations, personal motivation, social and personal conditions, and the underlying culture of the institution. In understanding issues of practice time, Jorgensen concluded that it was important to focus both on an individual student's phenomenological world, and on their deliberate strategies in planning and organising practice time. Hallam conceptualised practising and its

outcomes, using a model adapted from Biggs and Moore (1993), combining presage (including learner characteristics, the learning environment and the task requirements), process (including task and person-oriented strategies) and product (learning outcomes) in the model. This provided a framework which encompassed the multiple dimensions of learning through practice, and the diverse factors including goal setting, motivation, existing ability, learning environment and metacognition, which affect both short and long term outcomes of practising.

### ***Summary***

Existing studies of one-to-one instrumental and vocal teaching in higher education have provided important data about particular features of teaching interactions, the effects of personality traits in the one-to-one relationship, and the relationship between lessons and practising. Some of these studies, however, considered one aspect of teaching without considering the relationship between this variable and other characteristics of the learning environment. For example, the impact of modelling was analysed in the short term, but did not consider the degree to which students internalised this learning. This might be particularly important in higher education which is concerned with the transition to professional work, and the need to prepare for a career of forty years or more, sustaining the ability to play, developing a career structure, and remaining motivated and actively engaged in music-making. The investigation of personality types in one-to-one tuition related their impact to performance attainment but did not consider them, for example, in relation to motivation or practising skills.

In addition, many of these studies referred, without explicitly articulating a particular conceptualisation of teaching, to the transmission of musical and instrumental skills. There was some tension, however, between these implicit frameworks for instrumental/vocal teaching and student needs. Burwell, for example, began to uncover the importance of students' autonomy and active participation in developing their abilities in interpreting music, and found that this was not always a focus of lessons.<sup>4</sup>

These findings indicated a need to consider possible conceptualisations of instrumental/vocal teaching in higher education further, and to investigate the scope of the impact of the one-to-one relationship on students' learning. This idea was supported by key findings from instrumental learning in other contexts, such as the value of multi-modal learning in engaging individuals more deeply over the sustained period of time (McPherson, 2005; Mills, 2005), and the tendency for one-to-one tuition to remain "boxed", disconnected from other contexts of students' informal and formal musical learning ([www.musicalfutures.org.uk](http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk); Mills, 2005). The systems model adapted by Hallam (1997b) from Biggs and Moore (1993) provided an ecological framework with which to consider the multiple dimensions of practising. This suggested that a similarly ecological framework could perhaps be useful in conceptualising one-to-one tuition.

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<sup>4</sup> This concern for active participation and student autonomy is supported by many theories of effective learning which focus on a key skill of being able to transfer knowledge, skills and processes from the immediate context to other future similar and more divergent contexts: "The first object of any act of learning, over and beyond the pleasure it may give, is that it should serve us in the future. Learning should not only take us somewhere; it should allow us later to go further more easily" (Bruner, J. S. (1977), *The Process of Education*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.)

## **Conceptual models of instrumental teaching and learning**

Instrumental teaching has been conceptualised in a number of different ways. Hallam (1998) proposed a series of possible conceptual models developed from Pratt (1992). Pratt theorised teaching (not discipline-specific) by considering teachers, learners, content, the 'ideal' (purposes of education), and context (external factors affecting the teaching or learning). He mapped the data of interviews with teachers onto this framework and came up with five basic concepts of teaching: engineering (delivering content); apprenticeship (modelling ways of being); developmental (cultivating the intellect); nurturing (facilitating personal agency); social reform (seeking a better society). In the context of instrumental teaching, Hallam suggested that these models moved from the most teacher-dominated (engineering) through to the most student-centred (nurturing), and that apprenticeship most clearly reflected the practices of instrumental teaching.

The concept of apprenticeship in instrumental/vocal tuition has had considerable currency (Bloom, 1985; Persson, 1996; Olsson, 1997; Mills, 2002). In Pratt's model of apprenticeship content and teacher were the dominant elements, with a clear sense of an established body of wisdom and knowledge being passed down to the next generation: "The notion of 'craft knowledge' is appropriate here, suggesting that the values and knowledge to be taught are embedded in the actions of the practitioner" (1992: 212). Hallam (1998) drew on the detailed aspects of musical apprenticeship identified by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), including the recruitment of a student's interest and commitment to the task, reduction of degrees of freedom (for example isolating right

and left hands in piano playing), identification of goals to keep motivation up, marking of critical features, frustration control to reduce anxiety, and demonstration: modelling solutions to a particular task. However, given this framework, she also drew attention to the shortcomings from research evidence of teaching interactions, for example as described by Persson (1996).

### ***Schon's model of apprenticeship***

Schon's analysis of apprenticeship emanated from dissatisfaction with traditional university courses based on principles of the transmission of a body of technical knowledge. He outlined a core professional problem, first in engineering: 'We know how to teach people how to build ships but not how to figure out what ships to build', then in management: 'We need most to teach students how to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty, but this is just what we don't know how to teach' (Schon, 1987: 11). University disciplines, he argued, could learn from the studio practices of music, art and design, and dance, which he perceived as being premised fundamentally on the acquisition of practical skills, and on reflective practice, preparing students for making decisions under the conditions of uncertainty they would undoubtedly meet.

Schon suggested that the development of reflective practice, as a cornerstone of apprenticeship, depended on at least two components, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, although the distinction between them was not always made clear. Reflection-in-action seemed to correspond to what Campbell called the skill of listening in performance (1991: 282), but this provided a more detailed analysis, incorporating:

1. Action with routinized responses
2. Routinized responses which then lead to surprise when something goes differently from normal.
3. Surprise leading to reflection
4. Reflection-in-action having a critical function, questioning the assumptional structure of knowng-in-action
5. Reflection giving rise to on-the-spot experiment (1987: 28).

In the context of musical performance, Schon's notion of the on-the-spot experiment would relate to interpersonal communication between performers through body language, and to responses made during playing, for example reacting to a particular musical nuance heard and coming up with new interpretational ideas, reacting to a technical mistake and to particular contextual constraints such as the temperature and acoustic of the performance space. In this sense, reflection-in-action was identified with processes within a particular frame or stated task. It dealt with the details rather than a bigger picture: the interpretation of a piece, or programming of a concert, rather than longer term development of what kinds of performance to engage with, what and how to practise, what repertoires to choose or new music to create. This relates to the role attributed to reflection-in-action in Schon's more encompassing description, consisting of three phases: reflection in action; reflection on our past reflection-in-action; reflection on our description of reflection-in-action which comes from the reflection on the reflection-in-action (1987: 31).

The nature of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action for performing musicians are significant. As Schon's masterclass showed, collaborative reflection-in-action may be dominated by the teacher, and may not engage students in a creative process. Reflection-on-action cannot be assumed to characterise tuition. It involves less physical production of sound, and may appear somewhat detached from core business. Monitoring progress, analysing strengths and difficulties, considering implications for future performances and learning are integral to long-term development, but require additional metacognitive skills to those directly involved in performing.

The importance of reflection-on-action may also apply to the ability of translating existing musical and instrumental skills to different contexts. So, for example, Mills suggested that whilst students at the Royal College of Music, London, were learning to reflect-in-action, these processes were not being made explicit to them, and they were not therefore likely to be able to make use of them in slightly different contexts, for example as teachers themselves (Mills, 2002). They seemed to be reflecting-in-action only within the specific practices of a discipline, and were not developing adaptability. Whilst Schon drew attention generally to an aim for all students of "steering a course between overscepticism where nothing is learned, and overlearning which brings them to being 'true believers'" (1987: xiv), Mills pointed out more specifically that for instrumental/vocal students to be able to transfer the skill of reflection-in-action from performing to teaching, this process needed to be made conscious within a cycle of reflection-on-action. In focusing on the interaction in a masterclass in terms of an apprenticeship in reflection-in-action, Schon perhaps missed some characteristics of

instrumental learning, which neglected the creative engagement of the student and the processes of reflection-on-action, both of them crucial components in the development of new action and adaptation to new fields.<sup>5</sup>

### *Apprenticeship and its limitations in the twenty-first century*

Without creative engagement in both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action in ongoing interrelated cycles, it becomes more likely that the professional practicum, where Schon's apprenticeship is situated, would become an inward-looking learning environment where challenge and the continual development of new practices are not stimulated.

The balance and interrelationships between the different types of reflection are clearly important to the style of learning patterns which might be adopted. Schon described apprenticeship in terms of a linear progression, from the application of rules to developing new forms of action, where creative process and imaginative leaps were only the domain of the most experienced, advanced apprentices:

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<sup>5</sup> Campbell characterised the intensity of focus involved in a student imitating a teacher as a learning tool, describing this as a precise scientific undertaking: "The precision of imitation, which can lead to an internalization of appropriate performing techniques, is dependent on the observant and aware student. Like a scientist, the student absorbs every detail of sound, sight, and feeling through close and careful scrutiny and evaluation" (Campbell, P. S. (1991), Lessons from the world, New York, Schirmer Books.) In this context it would perhaps be no surprise if the creative engagement of the student and longer-term reflection-on-action were marginalised. Schon himself had earlier commented on the potential effects of such a scientific and precise approach amongst technical experts: "Many practitioners, locked into a view of themselves as technical experts, find nothing in the world of practice to occasion reflection. They have become too skilful at techniques of selective inattention, junk categories, and situational control, techniques which they use to preserve the constancy of their knowledge-in-practice. For them uncertainty is a threat; its admission is a sign of weakness" (Schon, D. A. (1983), The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action, USA, Basic Books.) He did not, however, comment on this within the case study of the musical masterclass.



Perhaps we learn to reflect-in-action by learning first to recognize and apply standard rules, facts, and operations; then to reason from general rules to problematic cases, in ways characteristic of the profession; and only then to develop and test new forms of understanding and action where familiar categories and ways of thinking fail (1987: 40).

Within the field of music performance, this concept of a linear apprenticeship is problematic, suggesting that creative engagement could only occur once considerable skill was accumulated. The bias towards reflection-in-action over reflection-on-action implies that new forms of understanding and action would be most likely to develop through reflection-in-action within a fixed frame of existing repertoire. It has become evident, however, that a subtle balance of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action is important in enabling creative leaps into using existing skills in new contexts, and developing new possibilities (Mills, 2002), and that these aspects of musical creativity and innovation are increasingly important for young professional musicians (Youth Music, 2002).

Nevertheless, a model of apprenticeship has been adopted elsewhere in the literature on instrumental teaching. Kennell, for example, quoted Dawkins' description, and attributed "the success of the human apprenticeship to three factors: longevity, fecundity, and copy fidelity" (Kennell, 2002: 244). He applied this model to one-to-one music lessons:

The music apprenticeship serves as a crucible for teaching music to each new generation of students. A crucible is a durable vessel with finite dimensions, just as the lesson is defined by a fixed duration. Into the crucible, separate ingredients are added. In studio lessons, these ingredients include the teacher, the student, and various cultural artefacts.....In this conception of the studio lesson as a crucible, different ingredients

combine to produce a desired change (2002: 252).

The limits of this conception are clear: that the crucible is designed to change the student to a specific place of participation in a known world. It sits neatly within a framework of socially situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Gholson, 1998), where the focus is on a community of practice culturally replicating itself (Kennell, 2002).

Apprenticeship has been identified in other contexts of one-to-one tuition. Perhaps closest to instrumental and vocal teaching in higher education is PhD supervision, and here the limitations of the model have also emerged:

PhD projects are sometimes described as a kind of apprenticeship, whereby the student, through carefully applying certain standard scientific procedures to a particular topic, learns how to do research. But being an author necessarily means creating, and the intellectual qualities it calls for are those of imaginative boldness, not slavish obedience to given forms. If PhD students are to write with authority, they must be prepared to think for themselves, to find the courage and the vision to construct their own personal meanings (Salmon, 1992: 10).

Schon himself, in a slightly different context, commented on the potential limitations of this model, and the consequent decline of the music industry and its ability to function effectively within society:

Among such diverse professional groups as engineers, teachers, musicians, scientists, physicians, and statisticians, there has been a slackening of the labor market and a decline in economic status and working conditions.....The crisis of confidence in the professions, and perhaps also the decline in professional self-image, seems to be rooted in a growing scepticism about professional effectiveness in the larger sense, a sceptical reassessment of the professions' actual contribution to society's well-being

through the delivery of competent services based on special knowledge....Is professional knowledge adequate to fulfil the espoused purposes of the professions? Is it sufficient to meet the societal demands which the professions have helped to create? (Schon, 1983: 13)

Cycles of 'copy fidelity' are probably not something many musicians would argue for. The fact that they may be a part of our traditional practice, however, should not be ignored, nor the potential consequences for classical music. There is no research evidence of a relationship between models of apprenticeship and dysfunction in the music profession, and indeed there are many factors which could contribute to Schon's observations, including economic factors and political devaluation of the arts in general in a number of countries. A trend of cultural contraction, however, was evident in a study of piano teaching in the USA. Duke et al. drew attention to the homogeneity of their participant sample as being one of the most striking results of their research. They contacted 400 piano teachers from all over the USA, all recommended as excellent teachers by 100 piano pedagogy faculty in colleges and universities. The teachers put forward names of their students, and the researchers then used a random sample of 951 students taken from the 2,642 who agreed to take part in the survey. Having expected a more diverse participant group, the researchers found that most of them were:

...children of well educated, affluent, White, suburban and urban professionals. Most are from intact families with two or three children, and nearly a third of their mothers do not work outside the home (Duke, Flowers et al., 1997: 77).

Furthermore they found that a large proportion of the parents of these students had studied music privately themselves, so that "Music-making apparently has become somewhat of a 'family tradition' in the large majority of the participant families...."

(Duke, Flowers et al., 1997: 78). These findings point towards a process of enculturation within instrumental/vocal learning and teaching, which is becoming socially and economically increasingly exclusive. The long-term trajectory of such a trend would be the gradual cultural eclipse of this kind of music-making.

Schon's model of apprenticeship, therefore, may in fact fall short and fail to fit comfortably with the climate of change in music-making and professional opportunities in the twenty first century. Versatility is now a professional necessity for many musicians who pursue a portfolio career, exploring new skills besides performing, and becoming involved in developing new vocabularies (sound worlds, extended techniques, electronics) and ways of working (contexts broadening out from the concert hall, collaborations with musicians from other cultures and disciplines, artists, dances, actors), and ways of working in an educational context. As Mezirow suggested the world is changing so fast that it is no longer possible to work on the basis of educating for a known context, but critical self-reflection is needed to facilitate change:

Changing social norms reinforce our need to critically examine the very paradigms through which we have been taught by our culture to understand our experience. This process of critical self-reflection has the potential for profoundly changing the way we make sense of our experience of the world, other people, and ourselves. Such transformative learning, in turn, leads to action that can significantly affect the character of our interpersonal relationships, the organizations in which we work and socialize, and the socioeconomic system itself (Mezirow and Associates, 1990: xiii).

Mezirow defined critical self-reflection as the "assessment of the way one has posed problems and of one's own meaning perspectives" (Mezirow and Associates, 1990: 16).

He equated this with reflective learning and gave it the particular functions not only of guiding action and giving coherence to the unfamiliar, but also of reassessing the justification for what is already known. The implications of this, and the potential discomfort it might generate, were also clear: “To question the validity of a long-taken-for-granted meaning perspective predicated on a presupposition about oneself can involve the negation of values that have been very close to the center of one’s self-concept” (Mezirow and Associates, 1990: 12).

Furthermore, the distinction between the timing and purposes of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action were also indicated:

Although reflection may be an integral part of making action decisions as well as an ex post facto critique of the process, critical reflection cannot become an integral element in the immediate action process. It requires a hiatus in which to reassess one’s meaning perspectives and, if necessary, to transform them. Critical reflection is not concerned with the how or the how-to of action but with the why, the reasons for and consequences of what we do (Mezirow and Associates, 1990: 13).

Mezirow drew attention to the significance of critical reflection-on-action to address the central questions of which ship to build, in which place, and for which reasons, which music to play and create, where, and for which reasons. This was echoed in the field of music by Yarborough, who extended the concept of reflection-on-action to include a range of research paradigms which might be used to revitalise aspects of professional teaching. She pointed particularly to the need for interdisciplinary knowledge and skills: “Most important, all of us need research techniques so that we can get outside of our subjectivity and view our musicianship, teaching, and scholarship more objectively” (1996: 198).

### *Artistry*

Connected to the concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, Schon identified “artistry” as a third important ingredient:

Artistry is an exercise of intelligence, a kind of knowing, though different in crucial respects from our standard model of professional knowledge. It is not inherently mysterious; it is rigorous in its own terms (1987: 13).

It may be that this concept of artistry in fact articulates the cumulation of reflective practice and its realisation in performance. Or is there something additional involved in artistry, which transforms a performance or enables a leap of imagination to making connections previously unseen between music and dance movements, or between performing and teaching? Schon’s definition lacked precision. Perhaps simply artistry may emerge from a particularly effective combination of reflection-in and reflection-on action, where the results are more than the sum of the parts. In these terms, the rigour of reflective practice would have to depend on the subtle interplay of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, facilitating both the development of high levels of technical skill and the capacity for making imaginative leaps. The rigour underpinning artistry was not discussed in detail.

A parallel example, however, from the field of medicine and the development of a surgeon’s expertise yields some insight. It has been acknowledged that alongside scientific understanding and an ever-widening body of knowledge, intuition, or a kind of human knowing, (perhaps artistry), operates, sometimes but not always to the benefit of patients (Gawande, 2002). Gawande first underlined the need for a surgeon, like a

musician, to learn by doing:

In surgery, as in anything else, skill and confidence are learned through experience – haltingly and humiliatingly. Like the tennis player and the oboist and the guy who fixes hard drives, we need practice to get good at what we do (Gawande, 2002: 18).

He also articulated, however, the constant uncertainties which characterised his experiences as a surgeon, and the many different kinds of knowing required to meet these:

The possibilities and probabilities are all we have to work with in medicine though.... what we in fact covet in our way, is the alterable moment – the fragile but crystalline opportunity for one’s know-how, ability, or just gut instinct to change the course of another’s life for the better. In the actual situations that present themselves, however – a despondent woman arrives to see you about a newly diagnosed cancer, a victim bleeding from a terrible injury is brought pale and short of breath from the scene, a fellow physician asks for your opinion about a twenty-three-year-old with a red leg – we can never be sure whether we have such a moment or not. Even less clear is whether the actions we choose will prove either wise or helpful. That our efforts succeed at all is still sometimes a shock to me. But they do. Not always, but often enough (Gawande, 2002: 252).

Gawande did not conceptualise the development of a surgeon’s ability in detail, but his writing seemed elegantly to reflect the artistry of a surgeon, its ever-shifting interplay between reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action, the constant new problems to solve, and the satisfaction of effective leaps of imagination.

### **The insight of theories of teaching and learning in higher education**

Aspects of reflective practice, artistry, and the need for these skills, have also been theorised more generally in higher education in terms of, for example, abilities in critical analysis and thinking for oneself, and facilitating processes of learning rather

than adopting models of knowledge transmission (Leonti'ev, 1981; Biggs and Moore, 1993; Dearing, 1997; Biggs, 1999; Engstrom, 1999; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Ramsden, 2003). This literature provides further important perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of Schon's model of apprenticeship when applied to instrumental and vocal learning.

An essential question posed in higher education has been "Why do students so often obtain quantities of knowledge, yet fail to change their understanding of what it means?" (Ramsden, 2003: 40). In response, Ramsden took the epistemological stance that learning is about changing the ways in which you understand things. From this perspective he constructed a conceptual framework of teaching and learning, which described three generic ways of understanding the role of the teacher in higher education, with corresponding implications for how students are expected to learn (2003): teaching as telling or transmission; teaching as organizing student activity, where the focus is on the student and the teacher uses techniques designed to ensure that the students learn; and teaching as making learning possible, where the focus is on teaching, students and the subject content linked together in a single complex system. He associated the third approach with superior learning outcomes.

Consequently, in terms of structuring a curriculum, Ramsden emphasised the processes involved in the construction of knowledge, quoting Bruner:

A curriculum reflects not only the nature of knowledge itself but also the nature of the knower and of the knowledge-getting process...A body of knowledge, enshrined in a university faculty and embodied in a series of authoritative volumes, is the result of



much prior intellectual activity. To instruct someone in these disciplines is not a matter of getting him to commit results to mind. Rather, it is to teach him to participate in the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge (Ramsden, 2003: 111).

In some ways this conceptualisation of teaching resembles the practicum and learning-by-doing described in Schon's apprenticeship. A more detailed analysis, however, begins to demonstrate where it diverges. Ramsden proposed three components of superior learning:

1. categorical proficiencies like knowledge of factual information, technical or manipulative skills.
2. specific content-related changes in thinking, for example understanding the formal theorems of Newtonian mechanics, or thinking 'like a sociologist'.
3. general abstract qualities such as thinking critically and imaginatively or being able to communicate effectively (2003: 20).

Ramsden pointed to the significance of integrating these levels: "Knowledge at all these levels, and the ability to connect knowledge at each level to each of the others, is regarded as essential if a graduating student is to be considered an educated person" (2003: 20). Such integration was not emphasised by Schon, and this perhaps sheds some light on the difficulties inherent in the apprenticeship model and the questionable assumption that reflection in and on action would intertwine in students' experiences.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Within the context of music, Ward in the UK, and working with school-level instrumental teaching, studied the use of musical analytic techniques within the context of instrumental lessons, and found that the integration of knowledge and skills was missing for the most part in relation to issues of interpretation and musical understanding of repertoire (Ward, V. (2003), Actual and perceived effects of the use of analytical techniques within instrumental lessons, PALATINE study day, Christ Church University College, Canterbury.)

In practice the learning processes described by Schon seemed to vary between different students. So, for example, the student in the architect's studio who already adopted deep approaches to learning continued to learn, but the student with a more surface approach to learning, or little intrinsic motivation, became bewildered and struggled to develop (Schon, 1987: 100-156). Ramsden, on the other hand, conceptualised a complex learning system linking teacher, student, subject content, context, skills and abstract qualities such as critical thinking.

Biggs, similarly to Ramsden, identified three levels of thinking about teaching (1999), and distinguished between three fundamental approaches to learning amongst students in higher education: deep, surface and achievement learning. He suggested that based on the level of learning engaged in, students react in different ways to the different approaches to teaching: those engaged in deep learning will learn under most teaching conditions; those engaged more in surface learning will struggle to progress much with teaching which applies the concept of learning as a function of individual difference between students, and will benefit most from involvement in learning-focused activity. Consequently he concluded that a transmission model of teaching would be likely to accentuate the differences between students' ability and approaches to learning.

Biggs argued that rather than focusing predominantly on either teacher or student, it was more useful instead to describe the characteristics of rich teaching and learning contexts. These included a well-structured knowledge base, appropriate motivational contexts, learner activity and interaction with others (1999: 73). Biggs also

differentiated between apprenticeship and problem-based learning, suggesting that problem-based learning is theory-based: students have to make their decisions from their existing knowledge, but they also have to hypothesize, justify, evaluate and reformulate their ideas and decisions, which is not the case in apprenticeship (1999: 208-9). Here he provided an example of medical students, concluding that students on a problem-based learning course tended to do worse on surface levels, better on deep levels of learning than those on a course following an apprenticeship model. Ramsden emphasised the value (as demonstrated by a considerable body of research) of deep approaches to learning in terms of student achievement and both student and staff satisfaction, but went on to suggest that because of the inevitable gap between teachers' intentions and students' perceptions of the contexts of learning they find themselves in, it is not consistently possible for teachers to instruct students in the use of deep approaches (2003: 63). He indicated, however, several points within learning processes where interventions might be made to encourage change in the relationship between students' perceptions and their approaches to learning.

These conceptualisations of learning in higher education, although largely based on the experience of the classroom and lecture hall, demonstrate the significance of different levels of learning, and their integration within a learning environment. The notion, for example, of rich teaching and learning contexts, and the multi-faceted educational framework these require, contrast with the concept of transmission through apprenticeship, in which one-to-one tuition is so important.

## **One-to-one relationships within the practicum of learning**

### ***Perceptions of one-to-one tuition, and dysfunctional relationships***

Within higher education generally, the nature of the relationships which develop between teachers and students has been given relatively little attention, although its significance, for example in terms of the impact of emotion on learning, even in the context of a tutor with a large class, has been acknowledged (Ramsden, 2003). In instrumental teaching, one-to-one tuition has generally been accepted as the most effective teaching/learning environment, and anecdotally has been praised highly (Manturszewska, 1990). No research, however, conclusively supports these views, and dysfunctional teacher-student relationships have not been formally studied (Kennell, 2002).

It has been suggested that as a direct result of the one-to-one student-teacher relationship, students may idealise teachers and be unable to discriminate between their abilities, even as performers (Abeles, 1975: 153). Students will tend to be in awe of their teachers, eager to please them, and most comfortable in a position where the teacher is idealised. Furthermore, the attitude of awe and students' motivation to "do the right thing" in relation to their teacher may also be amplified by the fact that the teacher is in a position to offer the student professional work, to help build up useful professional contacts, and may also be a regular member of assessment panels for the student. However, the reluctance of conservatoire students to comment on individual tuition in a questionnaire survey has not been questioned (Mills, 2002).

### ***Commitment to one-to-one relationships***

The one-to-one relationship in instrumental tuition has been compared with the relationship between a parent and child (Jones, 1975; Creech and Hallam, 2003). Whilst these studies related to school level children, it is likely that a similar dynamic exists within higher education, particularly if this is the model to which students have become accustomed through years of prior tuition. However, there is considerable tension between this concept of a parent-child relationship and the development of autonomy, self-responsibility and an individual musical voice in learning, which feature so strongly in conceptions of deep learning. In addition, higher education marks for the majority of students a life change to independent living away from home. At this point in development, it is easy to see how a parent-child, teacher-student relationship could easily be suffocating and regressive. Psychoanalytic theory would suggest that the resonances of a parent-child relationship cannot be avoided in one-to-one relationships, and that therefore the environment of one-to-one tuition inevitably becomes vulnerable to all those strong influences, both good and bad.

In higher education generally, the psychological dimensions of teacher-student relationships, amplified in one-to-one tuition, may be further complicated by a social aspect of the relationship which develops outside of the teaching interaction. Whereas in the actual teaching context the relationships are bound by certain conventions, outside of the lessons themselves there is greater freedom, uncertainty and possibilities for negotiation. It is almost certain, however, that what occurs between students and teachers beyond the boundaries of the classroom will affect the relationship within the

classroom (Schwartz and Webb, 1993). In one-to-one tuition in higher education, the boundaries between teaching, professional and social contexts are perhaps even more nebulous, and the consequences of social relationships are therefore likely to have greater impact on the teaching and learning environment.

The appeal for both students and teachers of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship within the context of developing musical artistry is easy to appreciate, and may be perceived, as Yarborough (1996) underlined, as having a certain mystique. Such relationships, however, have the potential to generate particular tensions, for example in establishing where the responsibility for the success of a student lies, both in the short term frame of performance within a single lesson or masterclass, and over the longer span of development towards a professional career. Yarborough alluded to what a student may achieve in the short-term within this environment, but questioned whether the effect would be immediate, lasting, transient or non-existent. She quoted Tommasini in the *New York Times*:

For an aspiring singer, the mystique of the master class is understandably enticing; within the space of an hour a renowned artist is supposed to size up your problems, impart secret remedies and send you on the sure path to operative greatness. The truth – and all music students secretly understand this – is that the process of becoming a fine singer and performer is a painstaking effort, and the best support students can have are teachers who stick by them week in and week out for years (Yarborough, 1996: 200).

The truth in fact about how people become fine performers is still far from clear, much more systematic evidence is required. However, as demonstrated here, the power of modelling for a student may provide a quick fix, and may immediately enable

performance level to rise. This is of course enticing, but the longer term effect on the student, and what has been internalised is far from clear. It seems possible that the exclusivity, intimacy and intensity of the one-to-one relationship, and the ease with which responsibility for development of the student can be transferred to the teacher, may invite loss of responsibility for learning on the part of the student. The situation is likely to be problematic in placing too much responsibility for the student's development on a single teacher, and a reluctance on the part of the student to value other relationships and interactions as significant. Chesky, for example, was concerned that some one-to-one teachers attempted to provide all the answers for a student, about medical and personal issues as well as instrumental and musical ones (Chesky, 2004).

The significance of learning contexts and the ways in which these may affect student learning and their performance outcomes have been increasingly highlighted with the field of Higher Education (Denicolo, Entwistle et al., 1992; Schwartz and Webb, 1993; Brockbank and McGill, 1998; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Crosling and Webb, 2000). Underlying these issues, the vulnerability of students through the transition to Higher Education from school has been recognised, for example, as a result of the pressures of adapting to new cultural contexts (especially for international students) and responding to changing expectations placed on them in terms of the use of higher-level processing skills, greater self-responsibility and autonomy in directing work, and effective time-management (Crosling and Webb, 2000). The evidence in these studies has showed that successful transition and the acquisition of the learning skills help to empower students through building their confidence as learners and so sustaining intrinsic motivation, but

that these processes cannot be assumed to happen automatically. On the contrary in many cases they require support. Case studies presented by Crosling and Webb (2000) were indicative of this, for example one description detailed the story of an immature student who was about to fail to meet assessment deadlines and was given support by the course tutor (2000: 57-63). In another case study the support required within a first year undergraduate programme which had a huge failure rate was analysed (2000: 88-95). This literature has demonstrated that the kinds of student support required may also vary considerably, depending both on the educational and cultural backgrounds of the students, individual social and educational circumstances, the student body and interaction within it, and the particular demands of the subject discipline. Some students may require, for example, one-to-one integrated and ongoing tuition. In other cases, on-line study materials can provide students with the most appropriate support. The task of teachers, therefore, is to be sensitive to different needs, and to be flexible enough to be able to provide, or call on, a range of different learning contexts.

Within the context of Higher Education, the fact that students' experiences of learning may be characterised by anxiety, has also been indicated (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; Trigwell, 2005). No research has particularly focused on music students and their approaches to learning, although there was evidence of underlying anxiety about learning amongst the oboe students in my own action research (see p.25 and p.27-9). However, a number of studies have drawn attention to anxiety in relation to musical performance (Widmer, Conway et al., 1997; Williamon, 2004). MacIntyre and Gardner analysed different stages within a second language learning process where anxiety



might feature. They suggested that anxiety could be associated with any one or more of three stages: input from teaching interactions, internal processing, and performance of acquired skills. Furthermore they showed that whilst anxiety could in some cases facilitate performance by stimulating increased effort, nevertheless there were also cases where anxiety seemed to be impairing performance, and even where anxiety was increasing effort, the results achieved by these students compared with those with a more relaxed attitude, did not reflect the increased effort (1994: 285). These findings have significant implications for the learning contexts provided for students, and the kinds of support they may experience through different stages of the process, for example during a one-to-one lesson, during individual practise and ensemble rehearsal, in assessments and performances.

### ***Parallels in PhD supervision***

Whilst there is relatively little literature about one-to-one relationships in instrumental teaching, the field of PhD supervision provides a parallel in higher education which is sufficiently similar to merit comparison, and where more research has been undertaken.<sup>7</sup> Similarly to instrumental/vocal tuition, a key relationship is established in PhD supervision between student and supervisor. Core teaching of the degree takes place in this environment, and the research process is guided and shaped in this way. There are also significant other parallels between PhD supervision and instrumental/vocal teaching, for example, in the tensions experienced between the development of an individual academic voice and the acquisition of craft skills. In

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<sup>7</sup> Although PhD supervision provides a significant parallel, there are also differences which should be acknowledged, such as the less frequent one-to-one meetings between supervisor and student, and the fact that PhD students are all postgraduates, and many cases mature students.

addition the length of study required for the completion of the degree, the emotional commitment and personal dedication, and the potential loneliness of such study, have resonances in both fields.

Phillips and Pugh (2000) argued that the process of researching was a craft skill, and that a PhD should therefore be focused on developing techniques, a research training, rather than aiming to be an earth-shattering piece of work. Salmon (1992), on the other hand, emphasised the personal direction of a PhD project, rooted in an individual's history and his/her need to understand an aspect of their own life better. She suggested that it would most likely involve huge emotional as well as intellectual transformation, and in this sense the particular knowledge of the supervisor was less crucial:

Agreeing to supervise a project means undertaking to work in close collaboration with someone who is embarking on a journey within themselves – a journey which may at times be profoundly exciting but which will also certainly be difficult, risky and painful. Accompanying someone on such a journey entails a very personal, often very intimate, kind of communication. A successful supervisory relationship, so far from being merely a matter of scientific expertise and academic interest in the topic, depends crucially on mutual sympathy and trust and on a personal resonance on the part of the supervisor, to the student's sense of meaning and excitement (Salmon, 1992: 21).

Consequently she viewed supervision first and foremost in terms of an individual relationship and the ways in which this might support the development of a personal research voice:

Most fundamentally, I think, supervising entails relationship, and what essentially defines that relationship is trust on both sides (Salmon, 1992: 119).

Salmon characterised good supervisory relationships as mutual, personally intimate and adventurous, and based fundamentally on trust. However, she emphasised the difference

between students, and the level of empathy on both sides required to support each project.

The potential difficulties of one-to-one student-teacher relationships were articulated by Phillips and Pugh, who drew attention to a perceived gulf amongst students between themselves and their tutors who, already having PhDs, were thought to be outstandingly brilliant. They considered that this was a common feeling amongst young research students and one which might easily inhibit their own development. At the same time some tutors, they suggested, were inclined to bathe in the reflected glory of the achievement of their students:

But those supervisors who have one or more ex-research students who are now professors speak of the achievements of these postgraduates as though they were their own (Phillips and Pugh, 2000: 27).

They also emphasised the need for supervisors to be supportive, remembering to give praise as well as criticism, and underlined the potential damage which can be caused by inappropriate criticism. Salmon acknowledged that doing a PhD was a fragile undertaking, needing support. She underlined that supervisors, however well qualified, could inadvertently undermine “the personal confidence which is so fundamental to the carrying through of original research” (Salmon, 1992: 88).

The analysis of PhD supervision showed that the perceived gap between teacher and student could also reinforce feelings of dependency on the part of the student. This was particularly problematic in a situation where the teacher was in a position to support the student’s emerging career through providing access to professional work. The particular

difficulty of the power of supervisors often remaining hidden, and the tendency for individuals in a supervisory relationship to respond in less than open, professional ways, perhaps by avoiding discussion about the relationship, or easily becoming defensive about their own part in it, was also identified:

Political considerations are seldom recognised in the discussion of academic life, where the discourse of scholarship and rationality tends to preclude the acknowledgment of power dynamics.....That academic power is seldom made explicit can create real problems for students (Salmon, 1992: 93).

The difficulties arising from a sexual relationship between supervisor and student were discussed by Phillips and Pugh, although they indicated that these were rarely covered by regulations. They suggested that the processes of criticism between supervisor and student, which were an integral part of the work, could become more difficult to negotiate, and the student could become more dependent on the supervisor, so making it more difficult to develop into an effective professional. They also indicated that an intimate relationship could disrupt relationships with other staff and students within an institution, thereby disadvantaging the student through decreasing participation in discussion and other learning opportunities (Phillips and Pugh, 2000: 118-119).

In spite of supervisor's acknowledged power and the delicacy of the supervisor relationship, Phillips and Pugh emphasised the importance of the student taking responsibility not only for the management of their own PhD, but also for discussing issues relating to the different phases and processes involved in the work. They emphasised that supervisors tended to focus closely on the actual work in hand rather than on aspects of the process of research training or of the one-to-one relationship

(Phillips and Pugh, 2000: 109-110). They did not consider it the responsibility of the supervisor to be proactive about these aspects of the work, although they encouraged them to respond openly, and resist the temptation to feel judged. In contrast, Salmon was more conscious of the student's potential vulnerability and the consequent responsibility of the teacher in managing the relationship. She also reflected openly, through case studies of her own students, on occasions where things had gone wrong and the relationship had failed.

The loneliness and intensity of a long period of individual study with a single focus have been acknowledged to be factors which hinder progress and exacerbate difficulties experienced in the one-to-one supervisory relationship. Phillips and Pugh found this to be the biggest psychological challenge in undertaking a PhD. This again has parallels with instrumental learning, where students work with a single teacher for many years, and often on the same kinds of problem. Loss of enthusiasm for the project was frequently encountered, especially towards the end of the process. However, they also found that as students gained independence from their supervisors and self-confidence, so their interest in their work became more intrinsic and they felt more involved in it. They suggested that supervisors expected their students to work independently, but that some students wanted to be more organized and told what to do, especially in the earlier stages. Consequently, they proposed a possible paradigm for structured development of independent work:

- *Early direction.* The supervisor introduces short-term goals, sets the work to be done, and gives detailed feedback to the student at the end of the period.
- *Intermediate weaning.* This phase involves support and guidance rather than direction. The work is discussed with the student, and joint decisions are made about what should be attempted and how long it should take. The supervisor encourages the student to evaluate any work submitted and comments on the evaluation, rather than on the work itself.
- *Later separation.* This phase includes an exchange of ideas: the student decides on the work to be done and its time limits. By now the supervisor should expect a detailed critical analysis of the work from the student without prompting (Phillips and Pugh, 2000: 181).

This provided a practical framework for supporting progressive autonomy and deep levels of learning which are self-directed.

### ***The peer group***

A factor absent from Schon's analysis of the piano masterclass (1987), but critical to the practicum of learning as he described it, was interaction within a peer group. The relationships between the interactions of the student group and those one-to-one tutorials, their differences, creative potential and tensions, were not elaborated. They were, however, highlighted in the context of PhD supervision. Phillips and Pugh suggested that the solitary and isolating experience could be improved considerably through working with other students for support, sharing experiences, giving one another feedback on their work from different perspectives, and sharing feelings about

the process. They likened this kind of collaborative work (which they concluded was considerably more productive than a competitive spirit between students) to the practices of Alcoholics Anonymous. Salmon also strongly advocated a peer study group between her students, as an environment in which they could explore aspects of the process of doing a PhD, and in particular their personal experiences of the demands, struggles, and patterns of self-belief which characterised their work. She felt that there was a clear indication that such a group led to increasing understanding and awareness amongst the students, and also liberated them from “the need to be right” in front of the supervisors (Salmon, 1992: 99). In these instances, the peer group evidently made an important contribution to rich contexts of learning, and provided a balanced contrast to the one-to-one interaction of supervision.

## **Summary**

This review has demonstrated that one-to-one tuition has traditionally most frequently been conceptualised in terms of transmission and apprenticeship. However, it has also shown that there are multiple dimensions and interrelationships which can have a critical impact on instrumental learning, including the fundamental purposes of tuition, the content and structure of lessons, the dynamics of the one-to-one relationship, and the connection between one-to-one tuition and broader contexts of learning, including peer learning, personal practising, and engagement in professional contexts. These suggest that apprenticeship may not be an adequate conceptualisation of instrumental /vocal teaching and learning in higher education, and may in fact magnify the potential difficulties and limitations of one-to-one tuition. In addition it may not provide a model

which meets the professional needs of students in the twenty-first century.

Whilst one-to-one lessons may be effective in some respects such as the undivided attention to an individual's development, the degree of technical and musical detail and nuance which may be communicated and discussed, and the level of personal support which a pupil may feel, there is evidence that some relationships become dysfunctional. Studies in the field of PhD supervision have drawn attention to the dynamics of power invested in the relationship which can hinder a student's development, particularly in terms of evolving autonomy in learning, and developing a professional career suited to the individual rather than one moulded by a teacher.

The next phase of the research aimed to use empirical fieldwork to further understanding and knowledge in relation to the research questions identified in chapter 1. The fieldwork would therefore be concerned with the ways in which teachers and students in a conservatoire conceptualised instrumental/vocal tuition, and the ways in which they perceived the strategies and techniques in teaching and learning which characterise effective and less effective relationships. It was clear that the empirical work should reflect the multiple dimensions of learning which emerged in the literature review, and should also pay particular attention to the complex dynamics of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship, and aspects of power implicit in it. The following categories of investigation were therefore established to underpin the enquiry: aims and fundamental purpose; the processes of teaching and learning; the one-to-one student-teacher relationship; and the context of one-to-one tuition. Chapter 3 considers the



conceptual framework and research methods adopted in the next phase of the research to address these questions.

## CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

The aim of the next phase of the research was to investigate the questions which had emerged in the literature review. This chapter is concerned with the choice of empirical phenomenology as the conceptual framework most appropriate for addressing the research questions, and with the research methods used to implement this.

### **Meeting the needs of the conservatoire context**

The literature review highlighted the fact that relatively little research has focused on instrumental/vocal teaching and learning in higher education, although there is evidence of strong opinion and beliefs about its aims and processes. However, changing conceptions of teaching and learning more widely in higher education, and issues raised by existing understanding of one-to-one tuition, its potential and difficulties, both emphasised the need for research in this area. It was clear that access to the research field, and willing cooperation of those actively involved in it could prove to be difficult.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Schon identified potential problems in the relationship between research and professional practices, for example with the use of models of technical rationality (where practitioners provide researchers with problems to study and test results presented to them, and researchers provide the methods for solving the problems identified). He suggested that these models promote hierarchical relationships between research and practice, where the relevance of research to the pressing realities of practice is often tenuous: "In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground where practitioners can make effective use of research-based theory and technique, and there is a swampy lowland where situations are confusing "messes" incapable of technical solution. The difficulty is that

In this context, the research design needed to be constructed in a way which would be sensitive to possible reluctance and scepticism on the part of participants, yet would generate rich data, yielding significant insight into the conceptualisations of teaching and learning held by both teachers and students, and into the relationship between these and the processes involved in the one-to-one tuition which they described.

My own position as a teacher in the conservatoire meant that I was an insider to the research field. This had some disadvantages such as the bias of my approach. On the other hand, it afforded me relatively easy access to potential participants, and the possibility of generating an atmosphere of trust around the processes of the research, its rationale, aims and methods. This enabled me to make participants feel understood, which could act both as a motivating factor in their participation, and as a way of avoiding discussion which was simply plausible rather than authentic (Cooper, 1993). My position also meant that the research could aim from the beginning to be closely aligned with professional development within the conservatoire. As well as contributing to knowledge, this study could form the basis

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the problems of the high ground, however great their technical interest, are often relatively unimportant to clients or to the larger society, while in the swamp are the problems of greatest human concern. Shall the practitioner stay on the high, hard ground where he can practice rigorously, as he understands rigor, but where he is constrained to deal with problems of relatively little social importance? Or shall he descend to the swamp where he can engage the most important and challenging problems if he is willing to forsake technical rigor?" (Schon, D. A. (1983), The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action, USA, Basic Books.) In the case of instrumental/vocal teaching, these difficulties could be magnified by the nature of the one-to-one relationship in tuition, and the fact that this has only rarely been opened up to observation.

of a programme of development at the Guildhall School relating to one-to-one tuition.

The relationship between this research study and professional development for one-to-one teachers reflected the research policy at the Guildhall School, and was given impetus by the processes and impact of my previous work on breathing and oboe playing (Gaunt, 2004; submitted (a); submitted (b)), which had utilised an action research framework. This research had been embedded in my own practice as a teacher, and had had an immediate impact on my own practice as a teacher, as well as generating knowledge about breathing and oboe playing. In this sense it served well “to detect and unmask beliefs and practices that limit human freedom” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 30). Being woven into existing structures of teaching and learning, it also provided an example to other teachers and students in the School of the accessibility and value of this kind of work.

There was a clear sense in which the current study, in order to maximize its impact within the School, and the culture of one-to-one teaching and learning, would be most effective if it aimed first to illuminate issues relating to one-to-one tuition, and then to underpin the beginning of a developmental process for teachers within the school. If possible, teachers needed to be engaged in the process, so that they would be stimulated towards professional development, processes of reflective practice and even action research themselves. In this sense professional development, reflective practice and action research could all incorporate individual (Stenhouse, 1979;

Whitehead, 1985) and collaborative (Ebbutt, 1985) work, and would have a key priority in both improving practice and furthering understanding:

Improvement and involvement are central to action research. There is, first, the improvement of a practice of some kind; second, the improvement of the understanding of a practice by its practitioners; and third, the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place (Robson, 2002: 215).

Research processes could equally attempt to improve education by changing it and by staff then learning from the consequences (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992). Alternatively the systematic collection and analysis of data relating to existing practice could be used as a reflective cycle to inform change (McKernan, 1991). An underlying objective for the current study was that the design should facilitate the beginning of an emancipatory process (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992).

## **The conceptual framework**

In the context of both the paucity of existing research about instrumental/vocal teaching in higher education, and my own particular bias as an instrumental teacher, it was important that a body of empirical data should be collected and analysed, rather than the questions about conceptualisation of instrumental/vocal teaching being conducted exclusively at a theoretical level from my own experience. The empirical work would play an important role in the ethnographic principle of making the familiar strange. Empirical phenomenology offered the possibility that data relating to the perceptions of teachers and students could be treated as phenomena in themselves, and analysed accordingly (Tesch, 1990; Cooper and McIntyre, 1993).

A number of potential research structures were considered. A survey of teachers and students using a questionnaire as a research tool had some advantages, in that data could be gathered from a relatively large sample, and could include participants from several conservatoires. On the other hand, a survey of this kind would mainly entail structured questions. Given the little existing research in this field, and the aim of making the familiar strange in the light of my own insider perceptions of instrumental/vocal one-to-one tuition, it seemed that there was a strong likelihood that the questions used for a survey would display too strong a bias, and would yield insufficiently rich data. It was also possible that there would be difficulties in getting a high enough percentage of returned questionnaires, since scepticism on the part of teachers and students was likely to be a problem.

An observational study of one-to-one lessons in the Guildhall School could have generated detailed data about many aspects of teacher-student interactions, which in turn would demonstrate conceptualisations of teaching and learning in action. Important research of this kind has been undertaken (Burwell, 2003; Burwell, Pickup et al., 2003). However, this study was concerned primarily to provide a perspective on the perceptions of teachers and students, their conceptualisation of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning, rather than with the teaching interactions themselves. Issues of access and impact were also potentially problematic here. It was possible that teachers would feel anxious and threatened about being observed, as this was not part of their regular practice, and consequently deny access to their teaching studio. In addition, Persson's observational study of instrumental lessons

(Persson, 1996) demonstrated the difficult issues relating to negotiating critical findings and evaluation of teaching/learning on the part of the researcher with the teacher. It was easy to see how any findings of this kind could further alienate teachers and make ongoing research and development even more difficult. Given that the key aim of this study was to stimulate the development of one-to-one tuition as well as contribute to knowledge, an observational study had significant limitations.

It was decided that an approach informed by phenomenology was most suited to the needs and constraints of this study, particularly in the context of my own bias as an insider researcher. Phenomenology has underpinned many constructivist conceptualisations of education, and approaches to educational research. Rooted in the work of Schutz (1967; 1970) and Husserl (1970), phenomenology arose from the German development of hermeneutics and the tradition of “Verstehen”. Its primary aim is to understand experience from the point of view of those who live it (Alveson and Skoldberg, 2000). The underlying assumption of this aim is that consciousness constructs as much as it perceives the world (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003). Phenomenology, therefore, does not begin with the assumption that a researcher knows what things mean to people. Rather, as argued by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), it begins with silence, a silence which indicates the researcher’s attempt to grasp the subject being studied on its own terms, putting aside as far as possible the researcher’s own preconceptions and bias. From this point of departure, its focus is,

as Schwandt suggested: “attending carefully to the details, complexity, and situated meanings of everyday life...”(Schwandt, 1998: 222).

Within the framework of empirical phenomenology, a method of semi-structured interviews with teachers and students to gather a body of data about their perceptions seemed to be both practical for the scale of the research, to have the potential to generate rich evidence, to be feasible within the possible constraints of access, and to fit with the developmental needs of the School. Semi-structured interviews could be undertaken on a one-to-one basis with a cross-section of teachers and students, without causing institutional disruption or concern.

An informant-style interview would encourage rapport between interviewer and participant, and authenticity in the construction of teacher and student perceptions (Powney and Watts, 1987; Cooper, 1993). My experience as an instrumental teacher would mean that as an interviewer there would be some common reference points with participants. Although there were limitations concerning my bias in this, the awareness of common reference points would also potentially enable the discussion to probe perceptions in greater detail. As Cooper suggested:

By emphasising the teacher’s expertise and showing an awareness of the difficulties involved in articulating craft knowledge, a collaborative relationship was established between teachers and researchers, in which they together explored the teacher’s thinking (Cooper, 1993: 326).

The approach of empirical phenomenology using interviews of this kind would enable a comparison of the perceptions of teachers and students to be made, and a



number of teacher-student pairs to be analysed in terms of the relationships between their perceptions. This could shed some light on the nature of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship, and its impact on perceptions of learning.

## **Research methods**

### ***Interview schedule and process***

Semi-structured interviews, on a one-to-one basis were used as a means of generating data about teachers' and students' perceptions of one-to-one tuition. Four key areas were identified from the literature review, which needed to be included in the questioning: the aims and purposes of one-to-one tuition, the processes involved, the characteristics of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship, and the place of one-to-one tuition within the wider context of teaching and learning at the conservatoire. The following questions were therefore devised for the interviews with the teachers, reflecting these key areas:

1. What is the nature of your role at the Guildhall School?
2. What are your fundamental aims as a teacher at the Guildhall School?
3. What are the learning outcomes you hope for with an undergraduate/postgraduate student?
4. How can these aims best be conceptualized in the context of instrumental teaching at the Guildhall School?
5. What approaches do you like to use in lessons? Can you describe typical elements and structures of a lesson?
6. What kind of planning do you do?

7. What forms of assessment are most effective, and which are you currently involved in?
8. What are the key issues in developing an effective teacher-student relationship?
9. How would you describe your current relationship with the institution and curriculum?

Similarly the following questions were devised for the interviews with the students:

1. Can you give me some details about how you have come to be a student at the Guildhall School, your previous musical education, and what stage you have got to here?
2. What are your most important aims as a student here at the Guildhall School?
3. What skills etc would you like to leave with?
4. How do you imagine your professional career developing?
5. What happens in your one-to-one lessons?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your current teacher (and/or previous teachers)?
7. How would you characterise the relationship between your lessons and practising?
8. How does one-to-one tuition integrate with the rest of your curriculum?

The full interview schedules, with prompt questions to facilitate the process of probing and deepening responses, are shown in Appendix 1.

A conversational approach was taken in the interviews to make participants feel at ease and enable them to talk as freely as possible. My contribution as the interviewer was to facilitate the participants in following through their own particular interests and ideas within the broad areas for discussion, which had been identified in the literature review, whilst not expressing my own views as a teacher in any depth, although acknowledging them to be there. The agenda was therefore set in broad terms by me as the interviewer, and covered the four key areas identified in the literature review. The detailed structure was left to the participants (Powney and Watts, 1987). Interviews began with general questions about the interviewee's background and how they came to be a teacher or student at the Guildhall School. From here points of interest were elaborated through prompt questions, and where possible, specific exemplification was requested to make perceptions grounded in the detail of the actual practice (Cooper, 1993).

The interviews were undertaken in a teaching studio, and lasted for about an hour and a quarter. Using a convenient, familiar location which was also reasonably private, was a deliberate choice, and also enabled enough time for ideas to be developed in detail. The interaction was kept as informal as possible, with chairs set up fairly close to one another. Where possible, there was no table between the interviewer and participant. The interviews were, on occasion, interrupted by other

staff and students. This was perhaps an inevitable disruption. The conversation was immediately halted to preserve the confidentiality of the discussion, and the interruption was curtailed as quickly as possible. The interviews were all recorded on audio tape and then transcribed. Each participant was sent the transcript of their interview, and asked to make corrections and amendments. These edited transcripts were used as the data for analysis.

### ***Pilot interviews***

Five interviews with teachers were undertaken as a pilot study. The data from these were analysed, and a discussion seminar was then held with the teachers, to report findings and consider alterations to the interview schedule and processes. This seminar was made possible because all five teachers elected to be made known to one another. The data from the interviews, however, was still presented in an anonymous form, with names changed and references to particular disciplines removed. A few additional prompt questions were added to the interview schedule as a result of this seminar (see Appendix 1), but no changes to the interview process were made.

## **Participants**

The participants were all instrumental/vocal teachers and students at the Guildhall School. Twenty teachers and twenty students were interviewed. In each case participants were selected to represent the four music departments: Keyboard, Strings, Wind, brass and percussion, Vocal Studies. Student participants also

represented a cross-section of undergraduate and postgraduate year groups, and teachers were selected to cover a broad range of professional profiles and teaching experience in higher education.

The five teachers who were initially interviewed for the pilot study were selected on the basis that they represented the different departments, and were close colleagues of mine, and therefore receptive to the research through their personal contact with me. They also knew all the part-time instrumental/vocal teachers in their department, and could make a number of recommendations of other staff who might be prepared to participate, and who might also between them demonstrate a range of opinion. Following the discussion seminar at the end of the pilot study, these five teachers prepared a list of recommendations. The remaining teachers interviewed were selected from these lists, to create an even balance in terms of gender, department and professional profile. Some of these teachers were already known to me, others were not.

Each teacher interviewed was asked to recommend four or five of their students at different stages of professional development, who were studying, or had recently studied, with them, and who they felt would be willing to articulate their ideas. They were asked not to suggest only those students with whom they felt that one-to-one tuition was working most effectively, but to suggest a cross-section of students. From these lists, twenty students were selected, to create a balanced sample in terms of gender, discipline, age and stage of development. The student selection was not,

therefore, random, but ensured that some teacher-student pairs could be considered. A potential limitation was that teachers would only suggest the students they perceived to be more successful. However, this itself yielded some insight into the teachers' perceptions of what constituted a successful teacher-student relationship. From the twenty teachers and twenty students interviewed, there were five instances where a teacher and two of his/her students were interviewed, and eight cases where a single teacher and one of his/her students were interviewed. For seven teachers, no student was interviewed who was having or had had lessons with them, and for one student no teacher was interviewed who taught or had taught him.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Participation in the research was voluntary. The research was explained to each person when they were first asked to do an interview. A written summary was also provided before the interview. A guarantee was made that each participant would have the opportunity to edit the transcript of their interview, and that anyone deciding not to take part in the project would not be in any way advantaged or disadvantaged with regard to their position in the college, employment, access to teaching and learning, or assessment. Written, informed consent to use the data for analysis and public dissemination was sought from each participant when they returned the edited transcript. Potential risks and benefits of participating in the research were discussed.

Data from other transcripts, for example in the preliminary analysis of the pilot interviews, were not made available to any of the participants until they had edited their own transcript and given consent for the data to be used. This was to ensure that participants were not influenced by other data from the research. The students were told that their teacher had suggested that they might be prepared to do an interview, but teachers were not told which students were interviewed so that anonymity could be preserved.

## **Data analysis**

The interview transcripts were analysed through a process of recursive comparative analysis, as described by Cooper and McIntyre (1993), using the software package, NVivo, to facilitate this. Following an initial reading of all the material from the pilot interviews, these were coded for emerging themes, and points of similarity and difference were noted. This coding was used to construct initial theories in the analysis. The analysis from the pilot interviews was then tested against another set of teacher transcripts. New themes and points of similarity and difference emerged, which in turn were tested against the first set of interviews. Finally the same steps were repeated with the remaining set of teacher transcripts to arrive at the full analysis. The process is summarised in table 1.

A sample section of a teacher's transcript is shown in Appendix 2, together with its initial coding. This particular transcript made use of twenty seven different codes, which was representative of the scope of coding used across all the transcripts. Once

transcripts had been coded, the transcript text corresponding to each code could be compared directly between the interviews. Searches on particular words or phrases

*Table 1 - The process of recursive analysis on the qualitative data*

Stage	Process
1	Initial reading of all pilot interview transcripts
2	Emerging themes, and points of similarity and difference analysed from the pilot interview transcripts
3	Initial theories constructed for the analysis
4	Initial theories tested against a second set of 7 interview transcripts
5	New theories emerging from second set of 7 interview transcripts
6	All theories tested against the final set of 8 interview transcripts
7	Final analysis made

could also be done, and these are shown within the coding in Appendix 2. The passages of transcript associated with individual codes were compared, and analysis notes were made. As the emerging themes and analysis progressed, the codes were grouped together within the main categories for analysis which had been identified.

A similar process of recursive analysis was used with the student interviews, although there was no pilot study in this case. Following the analysis of the interviews, five student-teacher pairs were selected which illustrated the key themes, illuminating commonalities and differences between the pairs.



## **Reliability, validity and generalisability**

This research was a small-scale, qualitative study. As such issues of reliability, validity and generalisability needed to be considered within the context of qualitative research in general. Reliability and validity could not be established, as in the case of scientific experiment, through demonstrating the accuracy of the research tools in measuring what they were declared to measure. Rather it depended on generating a dependable set of evidence, and a dependable analysis. As Cohen and Manion et al. (2000: 105) suggested, validity in qualitative data can be addressed:

...through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher.

Although the study was small, validity was sought through selecting a cross-section of teachers and students, and creating a depth of data through the informant-style interview process. Authenticity of perceptions was sought, particularly through building up detailed accounts of the participants' perceptions with specific exemplification, and by looking at the logical consistency of these accounts. The recursive process of analysis was designed to reach beyond my own immediate bias as a teacher, to allow detailed concepts to emerge, and to enable issues and questions which had not been foreseen to surface. The categories in the emerging themes were

also reviewed alongside the supporting data by an experienced researcher, as a way of reflecting critically on the analysis.

My role as a teacher-researcher undoubtedly affected the research perspective and the degree of objectivity achieved, and it is also possible that this role affected the participants' contributions in the interviews. This is discussed in more detail in the section on limitations in chapter 7. Care was taken to minimize this effect through the informant-style interview, the time allocated to each interview, encouraging participants to speak as honestly as possible about their experiences, and clarifying ethical guarantees of anonymity in the reporting of findings. Care was also taken to represent the participants' views as accurately as possible, through recording and verified transcription of the interviews. Furthermore, the ecological validity of the research was strong, in that it was undertaken within the conservatoire and integrated into a developing programme of research and staff development. Construct validity was considered in that the four key areas explored in the interviews arose from the literature review.

## **Findings**

The findings from the interviews are presented in the following chapters. An analysis of teachers' perceptions is presented in chapter 4. Chapter 5 is concerned with the students' perceptions. Chapter 6 considers particular teacher-student pairs.

## **CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS**

T5: oh yes. They put all their eggs into the one basket which is you, and if this relationship fails...

This chapter is concerned with the perceptions of the twenty instrumental and vocal teachers demonstrated through data from the semi-structured interviews. Following a description of the professional profile of the teachers, an analysis is made of their conceptualisations of one-to-one tuition in a conservatoire, its objectives and processes. The impact on learning of the relationship which is established between student and teacher is also considered. Findings from these data are presented in four key areas: aims in teaching, structure and content of lessons, the one-to-one relationship, and the context of one-to-one tuition. These correspond to the four key areas of discussion in the interviews as described in the methodology in chapter 3. In the extracts from the interviews, all names have been taken out; “T1:”, “T2:” etc. are used to represent each teacher talking; “HG” is used to represent the interviewer. In the bar charts used to illustrate some of the points raised in the analysis, the counts are shown in terms of the number of teachers in each category. The total count in each case is twenty. In the tables showing illustrative examples from the data, some headings are followed by a number in brackets, for example (3), indicating the number of teachers who expressed this kind of opinion.

## **The professional profile of the teachers interviewed**

The teachers interviewed were all engaged in one-to-one teaching at the college, and were drawn from the four instrumental and vocal principal study music departments: strings; piano; voice; wind, brass and percussion.<sup>1</sup> The demographics of the participants are shown in table 2.

*Table 2 – The demographics of the teachers*

	<b>Strings</b>	<b>Piano</b>	<b>Voice</b>	<b>Wind, brass and percussion</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of teachers interviewed</b>	6	4	4	6	20
<b>1-1 teaching loads (average hours per week)</b>	4-12	4-25	3-26	3-8	3-26
<b>Shared teaching of an individual student</b>	0	0	1	6	7
<b>Years of teaching experience in HE (range within teachers interviewed)</b>	6-32	10-20	2-30	3-24	3-32
<b>Female teachers</b>	2	3	3	1	9
<b>Male teachers</b>	4	1	1	5	11

<sup>1</sup> The recruitment of participants is discussed in chapter 3.

More teachers were interviewed from the string and wind, brass and percussion departments to reflect the greater number of staff in these departments.

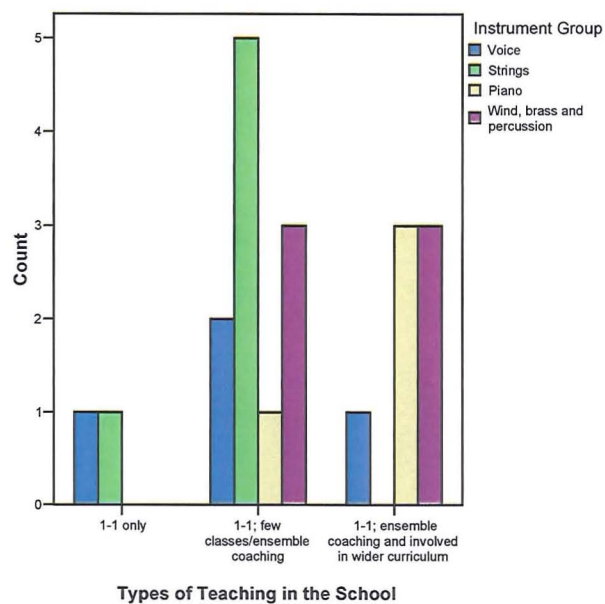
The number of hours spent in one-to-one tuition varied considerably. Whilst some voice and piano teachers were involved in a great deal of one-to-one teaching, wind, brass and percussion teachers were not. Wind, brass and percussion teachers all shared some of their students with other teachers of their instrument, whilst in other departments the one-to-one relationship was exclusive. Fig. 2 identifies the range of teaching activity undertaken in the college by teachers in the different departments. The pianists and wind, brass and percussion teachers were more diverse in their activity, with the string and voice teachers more focused on one-to-one and instrumental classes.

The overall professional profiles of the teachers were also diverse, as shown in fig. 3 (the biggest group being performer teachers). Here the voice and wind, brass and percussion teachers formed the most homogenous group.

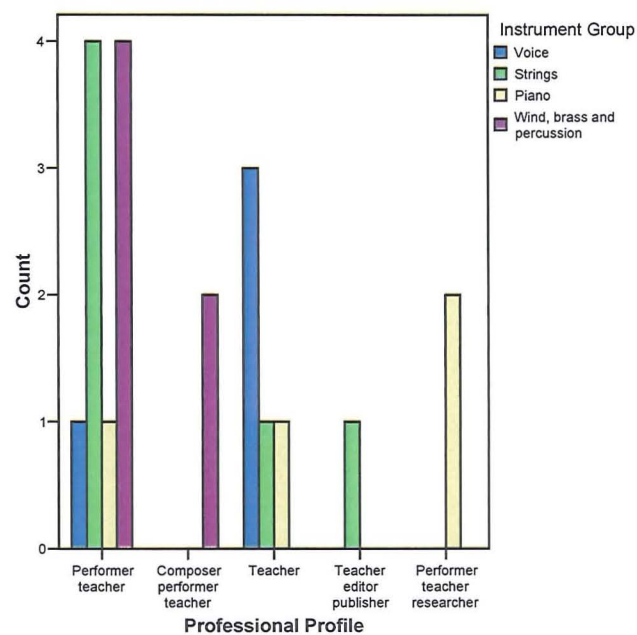
Only one teacher had followed a teacher training course, and this had not been completed. For many teaching had not been an initial vocational choice, but had developed either with a career coming to a natural turning point, or through being invited to add conservatoire teaching to an already prestigious portfolio of activity. They had learned to teach on the job, drawing heavily on their own experiences as learners. Three teachers reported that they had been involved in professional

development connected to specific aspects of their instrumental/vocal discipline.

*Fig. 2 – The range of teaching activity within the Guildhall School undertaken by the teachers in different departments*



*Fig. 3 – The overall professional profiles of the teachers interviewed, by department*



**Aims in teaching**

A range of underlying aims in teaching was expressed. Many of these were held in common, but there tended to be an emphasis in each case, a clear sense of priorities between the different aims, and these fell into five broad categories. In the most common category, teachers focused on a fairly wide range of instrumental/vocal and musical skills which would provide students with the tools for finding work within the music profession in some capacity or other. In other cases the focus was on a highly specific career, such as being a concert soloist or an opera singer. Other teachers were more concerned with supporting and developing an emerging artistic voice with each individual student which might lead to a number of different pathways within music. Some teachers emphasised the broad educational potential of engaging with the heritage of classical music and the processes of playing it. A last group focused on lifelong learning skills such as self-directed work, self-discipline and motivation. An example of each of these categories is shown in table 3.

*Table 3 – Different fundamental aims of the teachers*

<i>Lifelong learning skills</i>
T9: I want them to be more independent and able to self-learn, so they can go on learning, but have tools and the ability to ask questions and solve problems themselves, to find strategies...to reflect, because I don't think that learning stops at all when you leave this place....but sometimes I think they think that they're going to be there when they leave. ... I learnt most when I left....but not because I

didn't learn anything here, ...but because all that I did learn, I then sorted out in my head and went on to reflect and find my own way forward....I'm very interested in getting to the stage where they are more self-sufficient musicians..... particularly I'm interested in thinking about thinking outside the box because of the profession that it is now, I don't think they can learn to be what we've been...they've got to learn to be what we don't know is possible yet.

### *General education through engagement with musical heritage and processes*

T2: There is only one reason they are playing those pieces: they are playing them to find the maximum communicative, expressive power of that music.... I'm not saying that the only possible reason to be playing them is that they should then go and play them in public. I'm saying that we can study this music in total isolation. The fact that they have got concerts is not actually necessary, it's one of the engines that drives the whole process, because a student does need some kind of aim, but it's not the *raison d'être* actually, the concert, the actual *raison d'être* is the study of the music. And to study and to become familiar with, and immerse yourself with its communicative, expressive power.

### *Developing a personal artistic voice*

T14: I studied with a ... teacher ... for a month, and she says, "[name] you just fucking [perform] it," and I thought, "actually, yes! Just stand up ...and do what you do." And then from a teacher's point of view, get a technique behind that to enable them to do what they do a little bit better each time. My mother on every good luck card for everything I've ever [done professionally] says, "to thine own self be true." Shakespeare was right, be true to yourself, that's the only way you can do it...and people say, "oh yeah, what a load of old rubbish", but that's where I come from, I don't have any special gifts, I just work quite hard.

### *General vocational toolbox*

T17: ... what I feel I can contribute is this business of a secure foundation, both musical and technical.... that's what I want them to leave with... and the feeling that they can think about what they're doing and make conscious choices, be objective about their own playing. I try and prepare them for the fact that the music profession is more and more difficult and that it's really not very nice out there..... There's going to be a moment when you're put on the spot, when you're playing for somebody or auditioning and you've just got to be able to do it convincingly. They're not going to give you marks out of 100 but they'll decide where to place you in the profession. So I tell them in that sense even scale exams here are incredibly important...in that it's how to prepare yourself for a stressful situation where you're actually being judged because that is what's out there, and sadly that doesn't go with music, but you are judged all the time....So I feel that's an important part, this musical foundation is what actually builds up the confidence and the convincingness of the playing. So really when they leave I want them to leave with that feeling that they know what they want to do musically and they know how to achieve it technically.

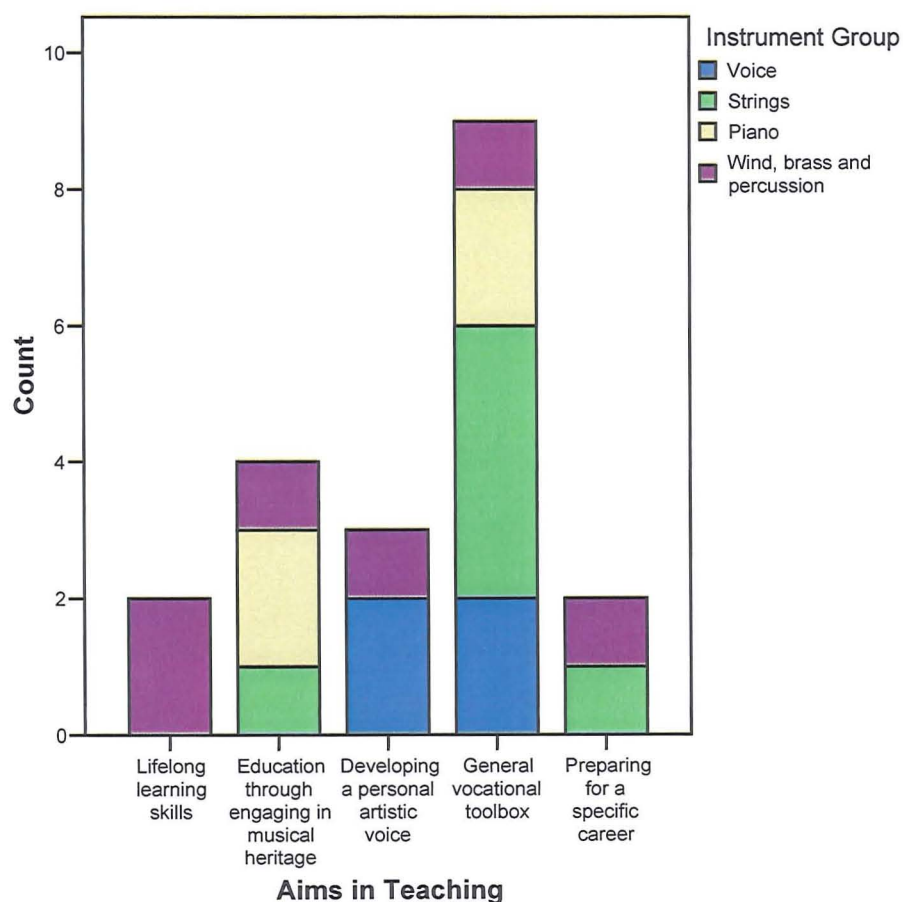


### *Preparing for a specific career*

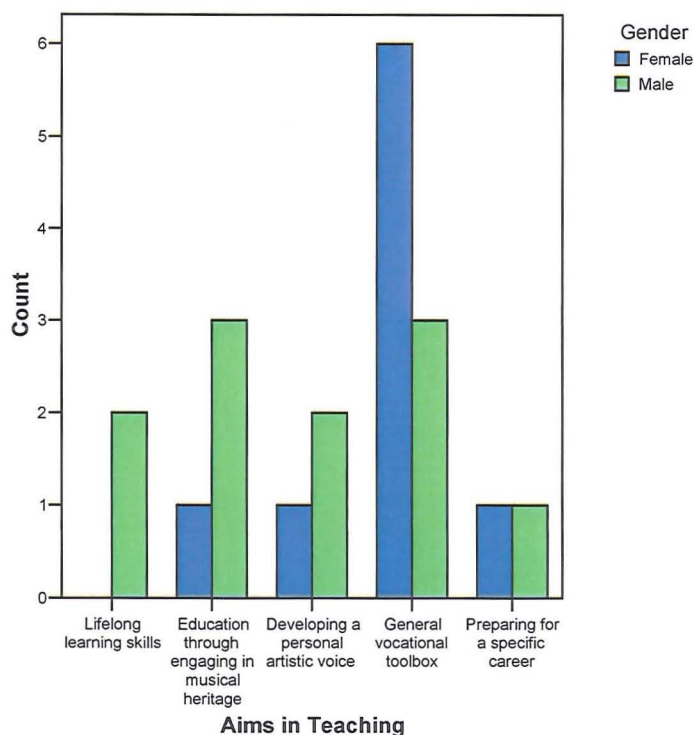
T4: I think what we are doing here, I'm not sure, is to train people to be orchestral musicians in the main. Particularly from my point of view there are very few [instrument] soloists. A certain amount of chamber music comes into it, but there is not very much repertoire. .... So really you are dealing with stuff which is going to make them strong and able to withstand the needs of the profession....

The differences in the ways teachers emphasised these aims according to instrumental group and gender are shown in fig. 4 and fig. 5.

*Fig. 4 – Differences in underlying aims emphasised by the teachers, by department*



*Fig. 5 – Differences in underlying aims emphasised by the teachers, according to gender*



These show a predominance of aims towards a vocational training amongst string players, and the most diverse mix amongst the wind, brass and percussion teachers. Male teachers were also more diverse in their aims than female ones, who were mostly oriented towards a general vocational training. The reason for this gender imbalance was not clear, but it may have been easier for male teachers to be more experimental in their aims stepping away from a traditional outlook of vocational apprenticeship which the professional toolbox represented.

### *Developing the resources needed to be a musician*

All but two of the teachers gave a fairly high priority to providing students with the resources they would need as professional musicians. These were described as vocational tools and were linked to aspects of instrumental/vocal technique and an understanding of musical styles which would enable them to tackle any repertoire they encountered, and the professional demands of specific contexts in which students might find themselves. For example:

T1: it's impossible ...the things you really have to teach them.....like, a beginner who comes from college and is making his or her first steps as an orchestral musician might have one or two chances, and they come in, ...and I have to be confident that when that very very soft low B is coming in, and the conductor's already making agonised faces....that they will actually get that bottom B. You've had all the studies and all the concertos we've done...it's in a sense irrelevant....but how can I teach that? You can't sit around playing lots of soft bottom Bs all day, because actually it still won't be good enough...it still has to blend and it still has to be the right sound....so you're going out there with only a proportion of the skills you need....

In most cases teachers used their own detailed experiences as professional performers to inform the fundamental principles of their teaching. So, for example:

T11: I try to make them think wider, not of one line. Sometimes I asked them "what's the harmony in this bar?" they couldn't say... "so how will you know where the most tension is in the harmony, where is the climax in melody?"... you can play the same note with different harmonies and it should have different colours... it's obvious. So I train them first to analyse the piece and to understand all the lines, it's not very difficult .....In the orchestra you can quickly recognise people who understand music from those who don't... There are many people who are practising orchestral extracts for years, can play from memory any of them

without a clue what it's about....

The training described here seemed to be closely aligned with Schon's model of apprenticeship (Schon, 1987), and the specialised technical issues made particular teachers appropriate for certain pathways. Only two teachers, however, suggested that they actively sent pupils to other teachers who specialised in a field a student was becoming particularly interested in which was different from their own.

At the other end of the spectrum, many of the teachers articulated an aim of developing a student's potential and their individual artistic voice as much as possible:

T2: the *raison d'être* is to explore, to give them the ability to find the very best in themselves, in terms of what they are doing with the [instrument], how to relate the [instrument] to everything else about themselves, how to relate the music to something that is intrinsically human, or intrinsically experiential.

Potentially there was some tension here between vocational skills and personal artistic development, but this was not articulated by the teachers. Little was said about the actual processes involved in developing the individual artistic voice, and there was more of a tendency to assume that this would emerge naturally.

***Tension between the transmission of a musical/instrumental heritage and facilitating autonomy in learning***

In fourteen cases the teachers conceptualised vocational skills in terms of passing on their own experiences as musicians, and six of these referred to fulfilling a debt of gratitude for the knowledge and skills they had gained themselves by "transmitting" them to the next generation. On the other hand the importance of students'

independence – “your role is to get rid of your role”, and their autonomous learning, particularly once they started working professionally, was also emphasised by eleven of the teachers. The skills required for this included self-confidence, breadth of understanding through experiences with different teachers and learning environments, and the ability to think “outside the box” (beyond an established way of doing things). Four other teachers focused on the value of the music itself, of learning through deep engagement with the music, and of the self-understanding which this process could bring:

T2: I think it comes back to, I think I would have hoped that they would have learned about the nature of creativity, the nature of themselves, it’s a kind of a self-fulfilment process, a kind of a self-knowledge process. I think to be in the presence of the very greatest art, and with very fine people all struggling with the very greatest art, is an education in itself.

One teacher emphasised how deep engagement with the music would engender both an attitude of ongoing discovery and a more humble and humane approach to performing:

T11: ... I’ve had a couple of pupils ... who were really, really talented...one guy in particular, but his ego just stopped him developing.... he believed he was fantastic and he didn’t need to improve much. He did have a fantastic technique but musically was quite flat, and I was trying to explain that he shouldn’t be trying to impress people by his fantastic technique and expressing his feelings all the time, but to learn how to discover... the best music is about discovering...

Whilst these aims of passing on musical craft, tradition and autonomous learning are not mutually exclusive, it was significant that only two teachers hinted at possible tensions between them, and the others were inclined to assume that they formed a

natural pair. This was confirmed by discussion about how, in practice, they promoted autonomous learning in students. The particular approaches to this issue which were articulated are summarised in table 4. Examples are given for each category.

*Table 4 - Strategies used by the teachers in facilitating autonomous learning*

<p><i>Exploring alternative interpretations of musical ideas, including improvising (8)</i></p> <p>T18: And so I go: we could try this or we could try that. Let's do them both, and I always try to get them to make the decision in the end, because I think at this level that is really important: that they're making a decision, they're making the choices based on how it feels, or what they're perceiving about it.</p>
<p><i>Not spoon-feeding students (9)</i></p> <p>T8: ... thinking clearly and trying to understand what you're after in musical and technical terms, is the way to independence and to playing like a proper grown-up. And so I won't dispense [technical solutions] to people when they start learning a piece. I'll get them to go and think about it, and actually to write in the part what they thought. And then we'll discuss it and I'll say, sometimes, "that's a very good idea you've had there...." and I'll go and write it in my music because it's something I haven't thought of..... Obviously very often I'll say, "look that doesn't make sense, it's much too difficult and it doesn't sound good," and I'll try and get them to really think about what they do.</p>
<p><i>Relating different aspects of the work; facilitating integration of learning (2)</i></p> <p>T17: I link every single thing up, I relate it all the time.  HG: how do you do that in a lesson ?  T: I ask questions all the time.</p>
<p><i>Engaging students in critical reflection on their work (2)</i></p> <p>T9: I suppose I constantly ask them to reflect...a typical, end to a piece for me will be, "well, what did you think?" ... "what would you do now if you were practising?" So I ask them to think about it...and also I don't want to go in there saying, "do this, this and this," when I know full-well that they probably know that already. But that's not going to happen in practice with that approach... "I know I made a mess of the middle section, it's self-evident, but what do I do about it?"</p>

*Allowing students time to think and come up with their own solutions and ideas (2)*

T13: I feel that I want to get out all the information that I have, all the help that I can give, all the advice, and that's not always helpful, sometimes it's better to let them actually help themselves, or to give them time even to think about it themselves..... I generally ask them a question, and then give them time to think about it and answer, so I try not to ask questions that have a yes/no answer, but things that are far more open ended. But I hope that by giving them time to think about it, that it shuts me up anyway for a bit, and then you know it becomes more of a discussion.

*Drawing parallels between teacher and student in terms of learning pathway (2)*

T17: I don't feel I teach top down, but I feel I try and teach as a fellow enthusiast, who has more experience than them...because I'm very interested in them becoming more and more independent in thought.

*Encouraging students to engage in learning in contexts other than the 1-1 lesson and personal practice (7)*

T16: I ask them if they've been to concerts, listened to music... just to remind them, I have to nag really, .... I always find that surprising.

In six cases it was evident that whilst a student's autonomous learning was an aspiration of the teachers, achieving this depended largely on the student, and was not a function of an approach in teaching. For example:

T6: I would hope that they feel they have enough self-confidence, commitment, a feeling of well-being within themselves and they could face the rigors of, if they choose ...to go into professional music, that they can cope with it and that they want to get involved and engaged with the challenges..... what I've tried to expound ... is a complete training so that they can go into the profession and they can succeed. I can only justify this by giving you examples. [Peter] is probably this country's leading ... player. I taught him from the age of 15 until he was 23, ... I trained him. He still rings me up and asks me advice about things. The other one was [John] who is very fast rising, have you heard of him? He's a phenomenal talent, and a lovely guy too. I started teaching him at the age of 13. He's now 23 years old and he rang me last week and booked a lesson! He's a very very fine player. They're both individuals, I trained them to think for themselves, they can play their instruments.

There's nothing either of those two guys can't do .....if I have a student who I feel could be more motivated, could be a little more imaginative, I try to stimulate it, but ultimately we are dealing with a world in which we are executants. We have got to be able to play our instruments.

Whilst this teacher who said that he trained his students to think for themselves, might be employing strategies to encourage independent learning, there was little evidence of this in what he actually said about his lessons. The evidence of this teacher's training of students to think for themselves was the professional success of two students. Yet these students were also described as particularly talented, and it seemed possible that they were the type of students who would be likely to think for themselves anyway, that they were independent thinkers as much by character and previous experiences as by the teaching they received. On the other hand, they were continuing to come for lessons, which perhaps indicated some ambivalence about the nature of their thinking for themselves. The degree to which this was a sign of maturity or of return to an environment of dependence was not clear.

Two teachers referred to their own independent thinking more as a stubborn characteristic than a skill developed through their interactions with their own instrumental/vocal teachers:

T10: We were meant to leave with skills to audition for a symphony orchestra and maybe do the odd solo piece.....So if you were a role model student you were a passive musician.....so I ignored all that, and failed my first three years.....

HG: and if you weren't doing any of this performing, do you feel that you would start to fall back on the old models, and you wouldn't keep developing?

T10: I don't think *I* would...it wouldn't happen, it's not my nature, I would find



something new to do.

This same teacher emphasised that many of the students don't arrive as independent thinkers and that this affected his teaching approach:

T10:...in the first year and a half or so there is quite a lot of feeling that you ought to do what you are told.....

HG: so if you were wanting someone to be autonomous, to think autonomously, what do you actually do to facilitate that?

T10: a lot of the time I play a dangerous game of not teaching them too hard ....metaphorically showing that there is space between where I am and they are, which they need to get into, where I'll join them as well. So you can work more collaboratively. So they feel able to take risks with their playing, and musically take as many risks as possible ..... be as creative as possible, ....make it quite clear that I'm not going to tell them how to do things.....

In some instances promoting responsibility in a student for their own learning seemed to relate to the experience of a good match between the learning styles of teacher and pupil. For example, one teacher contrasted two pupils, the first of whom was proving easier to teach than the second. With the first student the relationship was working well, and the student seemed to develop independently through her own effort, on the basis of material from lessons:

T2: And I've got one ... postgraduate student, for whom it is working superbly, but she is the most dedicated and sort of working and thinking and intelligent student that I have ever had, and yet she doesn't happen to be the best student.... I've ever had. She's the most interesting student, because she works at everything that we discuss, and when she comes back the next week, I can hear that everything that we have discussed, she has thought about, in a most disciplined way. And I went to her solo performance in the concert hall last week, and I was absolutely thrilled, ...and that's entirely her putting herself together, from the dialogues we've had.

With the second student, however, the relationship was less productive. Here the teacher concluded that there was a need to ‘unblock’ the student, in other words a problem was identified, and this was seen to be with the student’s learning.

T2: It’s immensely frustrating, I have another student who is a far more brilliant [instrumentalist] than this girl. And yet, he’s brilliant in a way that I am not.....for me his brilliance is all cerebral. I find, ... and that’s why it’s so very, very difficult, ... that .... his understanding of music isn’t mine, and yet I admire his abilities immensely, but I am at a total loss as to how to unblock him really. I don’t know how to do it...

This situation was perhaps no great surprise, given the strong artistic personalities and enthusiasm for teaching which characterised all these teachers, set alongside their lack of training as teachers or opportunities to reflect, experiment with, and evaluate generic learning and teaching issues. This is discussed further in the section on the context of one-to-one tuition.

### ***The art of listening***

The complexity of teachers’ aims and the tensions within them, particularly when viewed in relation to students facing situations and circumstances in the profession which might be unfamiliar to them and which might require new skills, was illustrated by the ways in which the processes of listening in teaching and learning were described. The teaching/learning environment tended to be perceived within a collaborative framework, with teachers and students both constantly refining listening skills, for example to tune in to and understand student needs, to listen to oneself in playing, to listen to other players and a variety of music in order to support musical development. Only one teacher did not specifically mention aspects

of listening in the interview.

For teachers, listening could go beyond the immediate context of hearing a student play or sing, to include quality of attention, an ability to perceive a student's needs, understanding their current state of being, and finding appropriate ways in which to respond to them. Intense listening also related to the nature of the relationship which developed between teacher and student, with the teacher supporting and championing the student, or on the contrary letting the student down.

For students, teachers considered that listening was important in terms of familiarity with a musical heritage, working in ensembles, and listening to themselves as a reflective process in practising and playing. Whilst musical listening could never be overdone and was mentioned by nearly all the teachers, one teacher indicated that it was possible to listen too much to one's teacher, and to be too dependent on their ears and support. In this sense it was possible that the ear of a teacher in the end inhibited the process of listening to oneself in playing and in developing a musical and professional path. On the other hand, the value of students listening to recordings of themselves playing was highlighted by a few teachers. This process was perceived as a means of developing skills of critical reflection, which was objective and not overly reliant on a teacher. Interestingly, the value of listening to oneself as a reflective process in teaching was not articulated by any of the teachers. The changing expectations in a teacher's listening were also highlighted by one teacher, from listening on an assessment panel, where the listening was for a certain

standard of playing or artistic expression, to listening in a lesson when the focus was on ways of helping a student develop. This change in perspective clearly had implications for the relationship of trust built between teacher and student, which is discussed below in the section on the one-to-one relationship. A summary of the ways in which teachers referred to listening in conceptualising the roles of both teachers and students is shown in table 5.

*Student self-confidence as prerequisite to effective learning, or an aim of one-to-one tuition?*

Many teachers emphasised the importance of self-confidence in student learning, but it was not clear whether this was considered to be a personal attribute or a quality which could be developed through the interactions of one-to-one tuition. Self-confidence was often closely connected to healthy physical use, physical ease or physical flow, although these ideas were often articulated in the context of emphasising the need to avoid pain and physical damage in playing/singing, or to increase stage presence, rather than in a context of the importance of developing trust in one's own learning processes. One teacher, however, talked about both physical and mental aspects of confidence, valuing physical comfort and internal awareness in playing:

T1: so I need to encourage her to entertain the possibility that ... anything that she does might be right, or in fact that everything that she does must be right, that she has the tools, the innate tools to realise ... the strengths of her own development. She doesn't need others to say that this is good or this is not good, that she can begin to rely on herself, directly, simply hear and feel, and thirdly she needs to be encouraged to experience the physical nature of her own movements when she's

Table 5: The use of “listening” in teachers’ conceptualisations of the aims of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning

Listening as a teacher	The student listening
<p><i>Tuning in to a student/ giving attention/ championing a student (8)</i></p> <p>T17:....you hear, you listen, you see, you feel...so I was teaching very much, even right from the beginning by listening to the individual...what they needed</p> <p>T14: ....but then I felt that he [his own previous teacher] stopped listening to me, that my [sound] became overblown, dark, inflexible and things that used to be easy were no longer easy and there was no explanation for it. .... You’ve got to listen to your students all the time. He was very good at putting me in the right physical place, you know getting all these quirky habits that I’d got...but I think he just stopped listening to me and because he is so busy... I mean he’s a marvellous teacher....he is so busy and let me down once....</p>	<p><i>The need to listen to one’s sound and playing in the process of discovering and refining technique and musicianship (18)</i></p> <p>T8:... most of them don’t actually listen to what they do when they practise. So you are trying to teach them to listen to what they are doing ...</p> <p>T15: Sometimes you get the over-enthusiastic student... doing hours and hours of practice ... going absolutely nowhere. So I ask them what sort of thing they do, how it goes, what they start with....and sometimes I’m bossy about it ...say if sound is a real issue, there are certain things that it’s better to start off with ....so start the practice by really listening to the sound.... I also encourage them to break-up...if they’re learning technical things, to just isolate it and break it up...sometimes I test them out in the lesson, if they play something, I’ll ask them, “where do you think the problem is in that?...where do you hear the problem?”....learning to identify where the issue is....and then asking what the best way is of dealing with that.</p>

	<p>T15: ... you can often make a small change or suggestion. To you, then the difference in how they play is colossal...sometimes they don't hear it because they're not yet looking for it. So I spend a lot of time saying, "OK, do what you did before...do it again...and again...can you hear it?"...and encouraging the listening. Now obviously he found that much easier because he'd be able to be outside of it for a minute.</p>
<p><i>Listening to analyse particular aspects of technique which cannot be seen (especially for singers and wind players) (2)</i></p> <p>T19: [teacher X] started helping me see how to teach and to listen... what you're listening for, function I suppose...</p>	<p><i>The need to listen to lots of music (16)</i></p> <p>T3: I think the most important thing is the listening....I want them to be really curious about music and actually to be listening to things all the time, because then there'll be so much they know without me having to say it....</p>
<p><i>Differences in listening as a teacher and when assessing (1)</i></p> <p>T16:....Well there are some who are more talented than others, innately talented. If someone's not so talented they can do a lot, they can turn themselves around, they can really achieve, but they can't be that talented as the person who's come in just like that. It's always going to be reflected in marks and things, because basically when we listen to performances we're always listening for something else, something outstandingly talented. I find it quite hard to deal with here.</p>	<p><i>Listening in an ensemble enables interaction, and is not part of the one-to-one lesson (10)</i></p> <p>T17: using their ears, listening to other people, learning how to blend, learning how to musically listen, learning how to ... interweave their lines, things like that, being aware of their colleagues. One-to-one it's a different experience.... And most of</p>

	<p>them are going to be .... ensemble [musicians].... Or even if they are soloists they're going to start off in a very small way...</p> <p>T11: Also you can spend hours learning orchestral excerpts... you can do a hundred of them from memory... and still be a bad orchestral player because you still won't have an idea what the music is like, how you should phrase, how to listen...</p>
<p><i>Teacher may inhibit a student's listening (1)</i></p> <p>T14: I think he would consider what he's done for me to be a great deal, as do I, but I think I'm a far better [musician] now than I was 5 years ago, ... you have to get out there and do it, you can't stop and think, "I've got to go to my teacher." You've got to learn how to do it on the job.</p>	<p><i>Listening and copying- apprenticeship (8)</i></p> <p>T4: yes, exactly.....it's only by working with people who are good at it and copying them, listening.</p>
<p><i>Listening as a metaphor linking teaching, playing and life in general (1)</i></p> <p>T1:... I can't see why every skill that we have is not a transferable one. That what we have been doing within one field of ... music-making, I don't really see why that can't be transferred to, or useful in, in almost any field that anyone would want to go to.</p> <p>HG: and that's about the way you approach ....</p> <p>T1: life (both laugh) well in a way it is, listening, self-trust, respect, when it comes down to it, the business of listening is about honesty and awareness.</p>	<p><i>The quality of a student's listening to themselves (reflective practice), which may be stimulated by listening back to a recording of themselves, relates directly to ownership of learning, thinking for oneself, autonomy (3)</i></p> <p>T8: And I do make it my business to demonstrate a lot in lessons, because I really think that is how people learn. At the same time</p>

	<p>I've got all sorts of aspects that I'll always be working on in my playing.... That's what I mean about teaching always being an offshoot of my own work. I try and make my pupils understand that it's a lifelong process, thinking about how you're doing things and thinking about how you're wanting to do things. There isn't going to be a day when they've suddenly got all the answers... but it's learning how to listen and learning how to think for yourself... I suppose that's what I'm doing in my own work, and that's what I try to convey to the students and give them the tools which work for me, which I hope will also work for them.</p>
	<p><i>Listening to other teachers may be a liberating process, extending understanding and skill (7)</i></p> <p>T11: sometimes they come and listen to each other if they want, and I try to get them to go and listen to other teachers as much as they can... all the teachers around. I really want them to get as much information as possible...never keep them to myself.</p>



playing, ...to begin to feel the balance of what she's doing.....she's always tried to do the right thing, so her own ... physical feelings... have had to be put on the back burner whilst she's trying to figure out how to do the right thing.

Here the teacher indicated that the teaching processes themselves aimed to enable the student to develop confidence.

The role of one-to-one teachers in helping to build confidence was underlined on several other occasions, for example the one-to-one lesson was described as providing “a raft in the midst everything”.<sup>2</sup> One teacher, however, also pointed to the tricky relationship between having confidence boosted by a teacher and dependency. This teacher wanted the student to be “more adult”. At the same time she perceived her responsibility as the teacher to be enormous: “I feel responsible for their lives. I moan about it all the time, but essentially when I take someone on board I think that’s a very big commitment” (such reflective turmoil was characteristic of several of the female teachers, none of the male ones). In terms of her own learning, however, she quickly identified the key development of self-responsibility, not through lessons, but through the experience of becoming professional:

T5: .... I started playing a lot and in very pressurised situations, and I had to be reliable.... Even when I was absolutely paralytic with nerves I had to be reliable.

HG: so how did you manage that?

T5: just brute will power. I practised like a maniac and I sat myself in front of my mirror and every single connection I made from one note to another, I analysed it.... So that I knew exactly what I was doing....for me it was total liberation....

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<sup>2</sup> This may be particularly significant for first year undergraduates, as the students are often leaving home and/or their home country, and beginning full-time music for the first time.

Here the change in attitude and practice came from her own motivation, and the process of self-observation and planning her own hard work. One might speculate how much anything said or done within the context of one-to-one tuition could have stimulated a similar outcome.

## **Teaching processes**

### ***Diversity of teaching strategies and resources***

A huge array of techniques and approaches to teaching were discussed, from demonstration and modelling to collaborative exploring of extremes of musical sound and style; from establishing a language with which to discuss specific technical aspects of playing to discussing time management; from singing or conducting the music to playing together; from asking a student questions to justifying one's own artistic decisions; from giving feedback on a student's performance to making a video or audio recording of their performance and asking the student to comment; from working at breath control, posture, movement or physical flow to improvising.

The variety of approaches articulated was perhaps consistent with both the variety of instrumental/vocal disciplines being taught, and with the fact that these teachers were all success stories in their own right as performers, and therefore tended to have developed a strong personal artistic voice. At the same time, dominant patterns of practice emerged. For example, no teachers described altering their structures to any substantial degree for different students. Nearly all teachers followed a similar lesson structure: the student coming into the lesson, a brief chat, followed by the student

performing or playing through some repertoire, study or technical exercises, and teacher feedback leading to detailed technical and musical work. For example:

T18: I actually find more and more that I do lay down the law with them and the lesson does have a shape...we'll start with technical things, then sight reading and move gradually through their repertoire that they've been working on, and try to cover everything if you can each week..... so it reflects the structure that I expect them to have in their practice as well.

Vocal teachers also included a warm-up and technical vocalising at the start of the lesson, and one instrumentalist used sight-reading as a regular way of beginning a lesson. The common structure of lessons was assumed to be universal, but no rationale was offered for it:

T2: I should think that what goes on in my lesson would be the same as would go on in virtually.....every single one-to-one studio...the student comes in, they get their instrument out or they sit down at the piano and they play, for the first five minutes or maybe 30 minutes, they sit down and you say "what have you prepared?", and they play. They get to the end of the piece and then you discuss it, or you stop them after a few bars and say ....

No teachers, for example, considered the lesson structure in an improvisatory way, something which could be used to vary lessons and their pacing and engage students in a creative process and respond to individual needs. One possible explanation of the more uniform structure generally adopted in lessons may have been its facilitation of a key quality described by the teachers: the ability to react in the moment to what a student presented, to respond to their performance and facilitate development. In this sense a teacher's improvisatory responsiveness was located more in the detail than in the overall architecture of the teaching and learning process. One teacher also indicated

that there was another sense of structure in her teaching, in relation to the longer-term development of the students, although this might not be apparent on the surface:

T20: It can seem in the beginning very unstructured because I'm spontaneous in the moment, but gradually as they go on, of course I've got a huge structure to my teaching, because I don't like the word 'technique', I prefer 'structure' because I teach them a lot about their actual physical structure....it's how their body energy works really, how to use their body.

Another explanation for the common lesson structure could be that it has arisen from tradition and habit, which has remained unquestioned over many years as generations of apprentices have become the next master teachers.

The dominant pattern of lesson structure was offset by one or two exceptions, which demonstrated idiosyncratic and imaginative approaches of the teachers.<sup>3</sup> One teacher was distrustful of a lesson beginning with playing, and felt that this immediately put the onus on the teacher "to come up with the goods":

T1: yes well OK, first of all the business of coming in and playing, yes that is the way that most lessons start. But I'm distrustful of that. And I find it puts the onus on me as a teacher often to come up with the goods. It's a balance, because students want to show ... with best intent the strengths of those things that ... have developed since the last session, so there is something of a mini performance there. But it could also be an excuse for not really thinking, to play through something, because it then puts all the emphasis on the teacher to come up with the direction for the lesson.

He preferred it when students would come in, discuss what they had been working on and the issues which had arisen, and then ask for help with certain things. Another teacher discussed the importance of tuning into a student at the beginning of the lesson,

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<sup>3</sup> In one instance a teacher even articulated how the nature of his instrument, and its musical roles within an orchestra or chamber group, informed the teaching process.

and described a process of joint improvisation to facilitate this:

T3: ...I would probably do 5 or 10 minutes based on where I was at.....so a classic one would be if I've got a chord sequence, I would play it and just get the student to play it, long notes over it, you know just thinking of the sound.

This made the initial process of engagement in the lesson both more immediately musical and perhaps more collaborative.

### *Teaching driven by musical, technical or learning concerns*

Although the teachers expressed diverse emphases in their aims in teaching, the descriptions of the content of their lessons were more markedly different. Some teachers, for example, suggested that they always worked in terms of musical issues first before coming to technique. Others emphasised a scientific approach to technique first which could then be implemented to tackle musical issues. For some there was no distinction in the emphasis on technique or music. A last group suggested that they focused on developing the processes of learning themselves. Examples of each of these categories are given in table 6.

*Table 6 – Different emphases in the content of teaching expressed by the teachers*

#### *Musical issues*

T2: ...when you have gone through the whole process of understanding what the music, or trying to illuminate what the music is stylistically and expressively, you then come to: how do I do it? It's as natural as night follows day, or let's say day follows night, ..... I usually start my lessons over here (stands at the other end of the room from where a student will play) and they play. Then I might come here (sits a bit closer) and we will start talking, and a bit of demonstrating, and a bit of dialogue. And gradually, that's why there are so many chairs in this room, I will come here (moves to where he would be sitting next to the student). And when I come and sit here, I then look at the fingers, I look at the fingering, and I start saying: Ah, you'll never get the sound that you want if you do that. Maybe this

fingering will help you be more rhythmical, and so on. I mean it's a perfectly natural process.

### *Technical issues*

T6: If however I have a student, like the .....who are gifted in their middle teens, then I will say, ...that's what both [teacher X] and [teacher Y] did with me.... "we're going to go right back to the beginning. We're going to examine all the fundamental principles of playing [the] instrument....." So this is more than just a question of explaining the principles, vital though that is, but it's also to establish a language of communication.....

### *No bias between musical and technical issues*

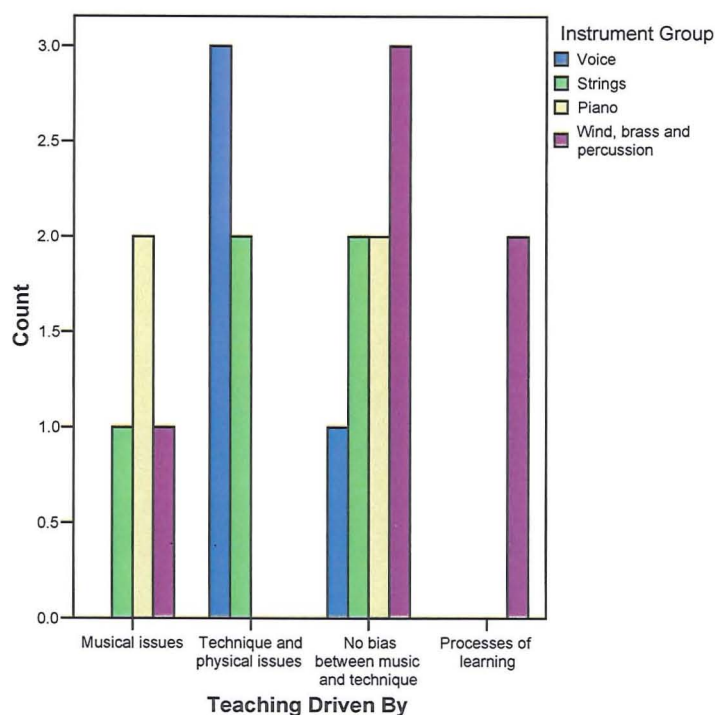
T17: ...the toolbox I suppose is a relating of one thing to another, rather than seeing them as separate entities.... I am assessing all those things that are going on, and I have my own checklist anyway, but you know it's all sorts of things, like I'm looking at them physically, and going through all the technical aspects....I'm listening to the emotional ... content that they are putting into it, whether they understand the intent that they're after ...

### *Processes of learning*

T8: Well I think if you're aiming at something, there's always part of you that's teaching yourself, and it's what kind of voice you use and how you respond to your own teaching. I suppose I do work on that in a very practical way with students because I find that so much progress can be made by learning how to think clearly. A concrete example is to do with "accidents" that happen when people are playing... let's just talk specifically, for example, about intonation. Suppose there's a student there who's playing something and he gets to a bar and it's out of tune, and then he tries harder and it's still out of tune, and then he tries even harder and it's a bit better... next week he comes back, and it's back to how it was. Now, whenever that happens, it seems to me that there's a very, very clear reason for it, which is to do with thinking clearly. When somebody has what seems to be some kind of accident in bar 13 on the F sharp... I say, "OK hang on a minute, what happened then?" and almost invariably the student says, "well it was wrong." ... and then I say, "what was wrong exactly?"... "it sounded bad," ....and then I say "well which notes sounded bad?"... and eventually we narrow it down to exactly what was going on in there....narrowing it down to the F sharp...then the crucial question, "was it sharp or flat?" and they never know, or at least when they're starting out, they just never know, they say "well it was out of tune". And I say "well it can't just be out of tune, there are only two ways it can go, it's either too high or too low." They then play it a few more times and start realising what has been completely obvious to me from the beginning, which is that that particular F sharp is always flat. So that's the first step to putting it right, and then the next question is, "okay that F sharp is always flat, why is that?" .... That's what I mean about tools and thinking clearly.

The distribution of the teachers' emphases in these categories is shown in fig. 6.

*Fig. 6 – Differences in the emphasis on particular content in the teachers' perceptions of their teaching, by department*



The contrasts in the accounts of what teachers focused on in lessons were more marked than in the articulation of the fundamental purposes of teachers. This was perhaps not surprising given the tendency which has been widely acknowledged for the evidence of practice to diverge from stated aims. Pratt suggested that a feature of practice and also the research literature associated with adult learning is often “an assumption of shared meanings and perspectives, an assumption that we understand what each other means when talking about, or inquiring into, something like teaching...” (1992: 203). Yet he also pointed out that it is in the practice itself that the significance of teachers' conceptions of teaching emerge, whether or not these are made explicit:

...it is clear that learners experience more than the mechanics of teaching activities, that is, the roles, rules, and procedures of teaching methods. They also experience the teacher's ideas and judgement as to which information will be examined, what sources will be respected, and whose frames of reference will guide the emergence of knowledge. In short, learners experience all aspects of a teacher's conceptions of teaching, that is, their beliefs and intentions as well as their actions. What is learned will be determined as much by those beliefs and intentions as by the activities used (1992: 217).

### ***The use of audio and video recording***

No teachers used school audio/video recording equipment as part of their teaching practice in the college. Two teachers, however, advised their students to record their lessons as an aide memoir, and others encouraged students to record themselves at particular points in their individual practice, either occasionally, regularly or particularly in the lead up to big performances. Only three teachers played back recordings of their students during lessons and used these for collaborative reflection. Two teachers strongly disliked the effects particularly of video recording, feeling that it raised the levels of "external self-consciousness" in a student, which they perceived as quite different from, and actually detracting from "the sense of proprioception, of inner space" in the student. The largest group suggested that the issue of recording was largely up to the student's preference, and that they should take the initiative. Examples of these differences are shown in table 7. The distribution of opinions about using recording equipment is shown in fig.7.



*Table 7 – Teachers’ attitudes to the use of audio and video recording in learning*

<p><i>Advise against</i></p> <p>T1: ...to look at oneself on video for instance and see what’s going on, is exactly the opposite of that quality which I think students need to build up as their own strength.</p>
<p><i>Ask student to record lessons</i></p> <p>T14: I get them to record their lessons on mini disc or whatever.</p> <p>HG: and what’s the rationale behind that?</p> <p>T14: if they get to a problem during the week then they will be able to refer to what I’ve said or an aural thing. One of my [students] has had trouble with an [aspect of technique], and he suddenly got it... I switched on the tape and said, “listen to this, how did you do that? Is that not what we’ve been talking about for a year now?” “Yeah, yeah, got it”. So you know he’s then got a record of where he needs to go, so when he goes off the rails for the next couple of days, he can then get it back on.</p>
<p><i>Advise to record practice occasionally</i></p> <p>T16: I don’t do it in lessons, but I tell them to record themselves for a few weeks before they’re going to perform something so that they can listen.</p>
<p><i>Advise to record practice regularly</i></p> <p>T15: I don’t in the lessons but I do encourage them to record themselves.....just so that they can hear for themselves .... sometimes if I feel that they’re waiting too much to hear from me and that they could make a lot more progress through the week by listening to themselves, that’s when I suggest recording.</p>
<p><i>Record parts of lessons and listen back</i></p> <p>T8: well, one thing that I do when I’ve taught at home, that I can’t do here, at least I haven’t yet done because there isn’t the equipment at hand is audio-recording.....it’s amazing the objectivity that they suddenly have....they actually hear, because as a performer the difference between what you think you do and what you actually have done...there’s always a difference. And for a very good performer the difference is small....they’re pretty sure of what has actually happened, whereas somebody less experienced they think they know but they can be wide off the mark...they think they’ve been expressive, but it hasn’t come across....they think they’ve articulated, but it hasn’t come across....a dynamic, but it’s only a pale imitation of what they actually felt.</p>
<p><i>Record performance classes</i></p> <p>T13: ... when it comes to preparing for their recital ..., I often use a video.....when they come up to performance, I feel it's then that all the other messages that they are giving to the audience by the way they [approach the instrument] and the way they get ready to play, become important. And of course it shouldn't be that, they should be, because they're not just giving the messages to the audience, I think they</p>

are giving the messages to themselves, so I should do it earlier...

*Record concert, analyze collaboratively*

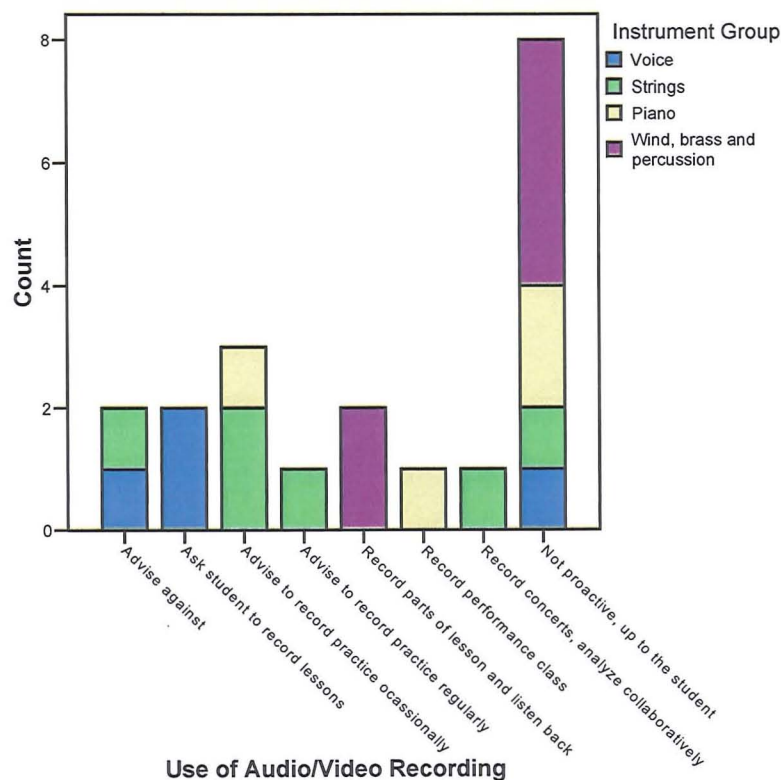
T11: ...I take a video of the concerts and then we analyze together what was wrong and what was good in their playing and behaviour on stage. One student, for example, played very well on the recording but wouldn't dare to look at the audience and looked very carefully at his shoes all the time...so funny, the contrast between his playing and presence...

*Not proactive, up to the student*

HG: Do you use other things in teaching...such as video, audio recording?

T7: no, I haven't got anything like that...it's partly that it's quite difficult to get hold of the equipment in the college if you wanted it, ..... mostly the recording equipment that one could bring in wouldn't be of a sufficient quality to give you an accurate reading of what you were doing, you know it would just sound a little bit basic and raw, and so you'd be so horrified with the noise you were getting back that it wouldn't prove anything.

Fig. 7 – Teachers' descriptions of the use of audio and video recording to support learning, by department



Five teachers expressed an interest in using technology more, but said that there were many logistic difficulties with this within the college. Others suggested that time constraints made reviewing recordings relatively ineffective.

The potential for recording to inhibit development was raised by a few teachers: one suggested that there was never time for recording during rehearsals in the music profession, and so students should not use this technique either. Two other teachers noted that recording oneself too often could lead to an obsessive approach to playing, a tendency to get stuck in small sections of a piece, recording them over and over again until perfect, or to use recording as a substitute for really listening and thinking for oneself. They therefore warned against using it too much, for example:

T15: I stopped him doing it because I needed him to grow up. I needed him to stop being a student. I needed him to start behaving, taking the whole thing more seriously, not to not have the best [equipment], he needed to have the best [equipment], he was about to go out and play, not "I'd better tape my lessons in case I don't remember".... "No, you know what you're doing now...I'm saying the same things....it's not that anything's ecstatically new that you don't know,".....I needed him to be a bit more grown up, to start to see himself as a professional instead of a student so he could envisage that he could make it actually.....

The teachers' ideas about the use of audio and video recording in teaching demonstrated that their approaches tended to be most strongly influenced by their own personal experience as a player rather than as a teacher. So a teacher who had made some of her own biggest leaps as a player by watching herself in a mirror was insistent on her own students using a mirror, and was relatively keen on video recording, whereas others who had no experience of video recording as feedback as players tended not to use recording

with their students.<sup>4</sup>

The use of recording in teaching also highlighted a core dilemma for teachers: the balance of traditional practices with exploration of new possibilities. Whilst most of the teachers were aware of, and potentially interested in the possibility of using recording techniques within their teaching, relatively few had actually used them, the reasons given being logistic difficulties or unfamiliarity with the technology. One might speculate, however, that this position also illustrated how the long tradition of instrumental/vocal teaching, as Duke et al. suggested (1997), has produced deeply held convictions which tend to resist challenge and change. In this sense it did not seem that one-to-one teaching was predominantly perceived as an environment in which to explore “outside the box”.

### *Feedback in lessons*

Given the significance of feedback from teacher to student in terms of its impact on learning, it was surprising that the teachers did not discuss this in much detail. For example encouragement of students was mentioned explicitly by only six teachers:

T17: ...even if they've done something very well in the middle of a [piece] after we've done our initial performance of it, I'll stop and point out and say “that's it! You've got to remember that, that's brilliant.” Because you know it's just part of the whole process as well, you've got to remember the good things as well as the bad.....

Checking what students were understanding in the lessons was mentioned only once; tolerance and knowing when to let something go and not push for change was discussed

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<sup>4</sup> This echoes findings in the research on breathing and oboe playing, where the strength of players' opinion, and the lack of research evidence to underpin it, was a particular feature of the available literature, and my own bias as a player was evident in my teaching strategies (see chapter 1).

by two teachers, and seven teachers indicated that they summed up at the end of a lesson with a student what had been worked on, and what needed to be covered in practising. Only one teacher, however, asked for feedback from the students on the lesson. This suggested that in many cases the teachers' focus in lessons was more on the subject content than on this aspect of their interpersonal communication.

### *Monitoring learning, monitoring teaching*

The emphasis in teachers' thinking on the content of technical and musical issues being taught, in preference to issues of learning, was also evident in their attitudes to monitoring learning. Over half the teachers expressed a sense of guilt about not keeping notes on students or asking them to keep notes: "I try and then I fail!" Time pressure, however, was often given as the reason why records were not kept. An instance of systematic monitoring was rare:

T14: I'm very good, I put them [notes] on a laptop. I go home and write notes and I carry a little book for the Guildhall, and it's got all the panels I've sat on, all the people's reports, but I think it's important - it doesn't actually happen here, that students should be able to approach members of the panel and say, "how did I do?" "Well I liked this, I didn't like that, I thought that was good, that was bad", I also keep that, it's all in the same book.

The majority of teachers left monitoring to their memory, the student and/or assessment processes. One teacher openly acknowledged the difficulties of keeping track of students and their progress. Only a few teachers made regular short notes as an aide memoir. This tended to consist of a list of repertoire being studied, and repertoire planned for future assessments and public performances. A few others extended the process of making notes, and used it as a stimulus for their own self-reflection on

teaching. In this sense making notes was a reflective process in itself, helping to organise and deepen engagement with the process of learning. If shared, it could also deepen the communication between teacher and student, and between the teacher and other members of staff:

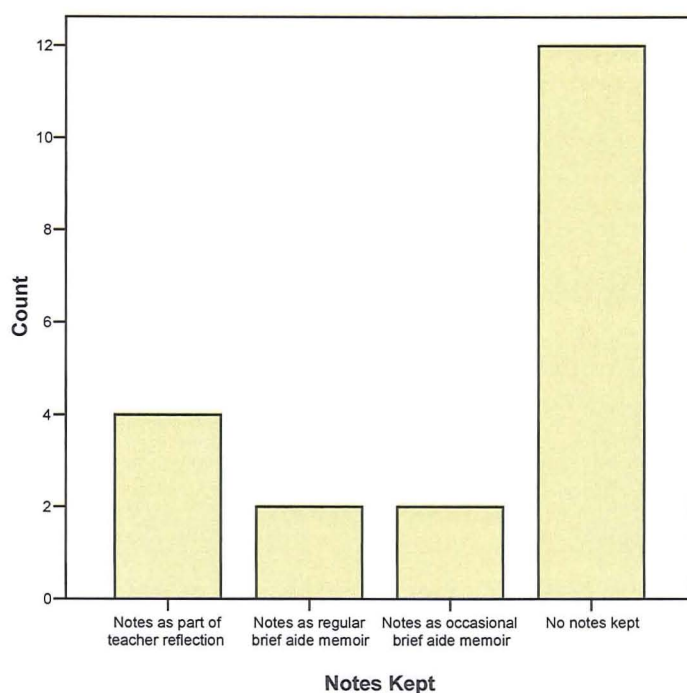
T9: I do look at my notes sometimes ... but frequently I don't....the fact that I've written them means I remember what happened. But I know they're there so if I can't recall what we were doing last time, particularly if a student has a lesson once every 3 weeks....the notes stimulate the last lesson. I hope that when they take notes it means that they won't have to look at it ..., the fact that they've written it means they've organised their thoughts and gone deep enough in..... their platform reports ... are very important to me, ....getting other people's views is very valuable. So that gives me a sense of what another person's perception is of my student, because my perception of my student is not necessarily completely objective..... I always want to know what people have said, so I can see that ties in, or I've missed something. There's not really any formal reflection, although we do sit sometimes and I'll ask them where they think they've got to, asking them what they think they have achieved.

Examples of these different practices of keeping notes are shown in table 8. The distribution of attitudes to keeping ongoing records on students is shown in fig. 8.

*Table 8 -Different practices articulated by the teachers in relation to keeping records about their teaching*

<p><i>Notes as part of teacher reflection</i></p> <p>T9: At the beginning of the year I'll be mentally thinking, very strongly, in particular about first years...where are they at?...are there going to be issues of tone, of technique and repertoire that we need to look at? ... I keep notes on my little machine...I don't write them in the lesson, I write them up on the train on the way home. I've had to do that...I've kept notes of most of my masterclasses, particularly in the early days, so that I don't repeat myself too much, and in the lesson notes I know what we did and what is expected from the next lesson..... so I try and follow-up... "we said we'd hear the first movement of the Hindemith so we're going to hear the 1st movement of the Hindemith,"...that doesn't always happen in practice, but I think it's important to follow up....if they've got a line that they're practising for their 20 hours, or whatever they've done, and then I don't hear what they've practised all week, ... I don't think that's good, so I think I must try and follow up...</p>
<p><i>Notes as a regular brief aide memoir</i></p> <p>T13: I keep notes of repertoire they're learning, but I don't really....</p>
<p><i>Notes as an occasional brief aide memoir</i></p> <p>T2: I don't keep written records at all....I mean of course I do have a written record because it's all in my diary....the times that I teach them and the amount of time I've taught them is in my diary, but I have never consulted it...the only record I keep is I have a page in a notebook which has their name, address, telephone number, all contact details, for each student, each student has a page, and on that page I write their repertoire, and the repertoire which they have said they want to learn, I have suggested they might learn. And I also keep a particular record of concert recital programmes that they are going to give... And it often changes, and it often gets crossed out and it often becomes illegible.</p>
<p><i>No written notes kept</i></p> <p>T19: What I tend to do is work on the things that I want to do. Nothing is ever the same, certain teachers believe that there should be a method in it. Well the method should be that the teacher needs to remember what they did last time, and so often unfortunately if you have a huge teaching practice you don't remember who that person's name is, let alone that they had problems with this [aspect of technique] or whatever.</p>

*Fig. 8 – Teachers' attitudes to keeping ongoing records about students and about their teaching*



## **The one-to-one relationship**

### ***Intense expectations of the one-to-one relationship***

The one-to-one relationship was viewed universally as an indispensable, intense and intricate part of instrumental/vocal learning. Its underlying characteristics were, however, articulated in different ways. Some suggested that what they perceived as parental aspects of guiding, nurturing and moulding the student were paramount. For others, the characteristics of friendship were more appropriate. Most of the teachers saw these two aspects being combined. In a few cases, the relationship was only really



characterised in terms of collaborative curiosity, and the personal aspects were less important. One teacher drew an analogy between the teacher-student and doctor-patient relationship. Examples of these characterisations of the teacher-pupil relationship are shown in table 9. The emphasis in how teachers characterised the one-to-one teacher-student relationship is shown in fig. 9.

*Table 9 – Teachers’ characterisations of the one-to-one relationship*

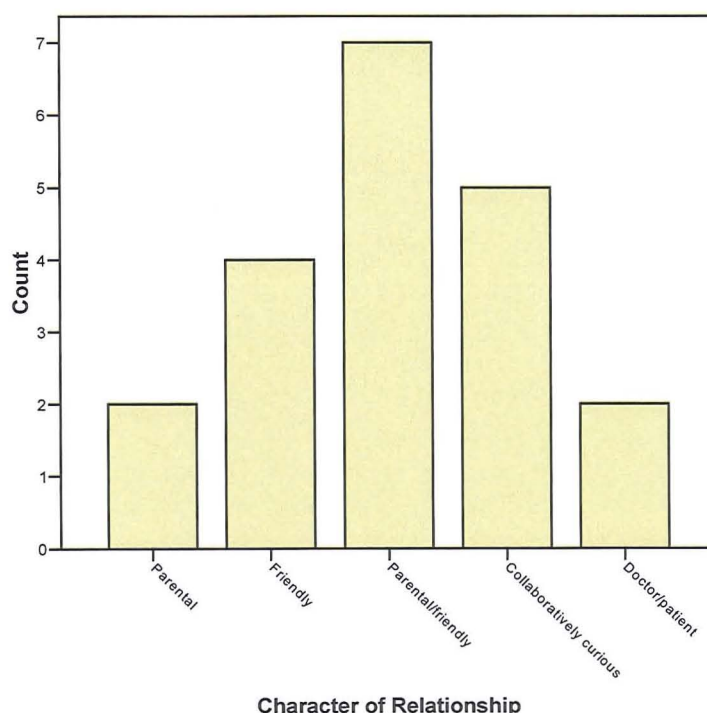
<p><i>Parental</i></p> <p>T15: I think being a good teacher is being a good parent. You try to give them resources to go out into the world.</p>
<p><i>Friendly</i></p> <p>T14: I take them to the bar... I treat all my students as if they're friends...</p> <p>T12: I think I probably err on the side of keeping my distance....my feeling is that some of my students feel that I'm a bit distant. Other teachers are more successful .....at playing a kind of friendly role, it's getting more and more difficult as the years go by. Seriously, you begin to look and act much older than them. My students are now old enough to be my very youngest children...it's impossible....maybe I'm not that sort of person....I'm very friendly with them, but there's a level at which I'm doing very different things from them...</p>
<p><i>Parental/friendly</i></p> <p>T1: you know its kind of friendly, it's a friendship but it's not, it's a friendship within a context, its support, its slightly parental, it's different things at different times. It's an extremely complex relationship because actually it involves little bits of everything: you've got to be partners in crime at some point, you'd have been parental to a certain degree - advisory in that sense, I don't mean like a parent in terms of laying down the law....</p>
<p><i>Collaboratively curious</i></p> <p>T18: [one teacher] always used to say that a teacher can just be a signpost, they can't really be more than that....and to be conscious that your student is the one who's doing it, and also to sort of feel that you're exploring together rather than that you're telling them....you're dictating to them.....and they shouldn't</p>

see you as a fountain of everything that's true and right. I mean they need to have faith in you in a healthy way, but then you can't really set yourself up as knowing everything.

*Doctor/patient*

T4: It's a bit like going to the doctors isn't it? If you go to the doctors and say "look I've a terrible pain here in my neck here" or bad stomach and ....he's only doing what we are doing, he says "well I think it's so-and so, so get these pills from the chemist and come and see me next week". You go back the following week and he goes "how did you go?" and you go "it's still the same"... "Did you take the pills?" ... "No." So he doesn't know if they would work or they didn't. If you took the pills and they don't work - you still have the same problem, then he knows that that is the wrong thing. So that kind of give and take has to come from them as well.

*Fig. 9 – Different emphases in the teachers' characterisation of the one-to-one teacher-student relationship*



In many cases the amount of time spent together (often over years, and spilling into time outside weekly lessons) and the intensity of a shared project broke down elements

of formality, and lasting bonds of friendship formed (a number of teachers referred to their own former teachers now as close friends). This brought the relationship into sharp focus, underlining the potential difficulties in sustaining it, which would require maturity on both sides. Whilst at best it might be fulfilling, creative and inspiring, it could clearly also be volatile and damaging.

### ***Trust in the one-to-one relationship***

An underlying characteristic in all these conceptions seemed to be trust. This was indicated as key to the teacher-student relationship by all the teachers, particularly in terms of the student trusting the teacher:

T17: I'd say the first thing is that they really have to trust me, and trust that the situation that they're in is very confidential, really believe that I am not just going to run off, because the only way that I can work with them really successfully is if they are just going to be strict with themselves and be very honest about what they're doing.... and also I work in a very egalitarian way, I really don't like hierarchies, I prefer that they get the feeling that we are there together trying to find things, because I think that the moment you get this awe situation, then they are going to just be mute, and they're not going to respond and give me feedback as well, and it's just a hopeless situation ....

Trust was also seen to be reciprocal by this teacher, and she emphasised the perception of a collaborative undertaking, reducing perceptions of power in the relationship.

The dynamics of power were only discussed directly by four teachers, although they were implicit in the understanding of the ethical boundaries of the relationship, and indeed in the analogies of parental relations. In one case a teacher also remembered the issue of power in relation to her own learning, identifying it in terms of the musical and instrumental awe in which she held her own teachers:

T5: and also there's this thing of .... I mean I was totally in awe of my teachers... I think this generation are less so, or maybe I'm not that awesome! (Laughs) If my teachers said "jump!" I just jumped... there was no question.... Now it's, "well I won't jump before 10 o'clock." Well they don't do that with me any more, I have to say. I mean I think "I can't get up before 11 o'clock in the morning", well I just won't be having it....

In articulating the extraordinary degree of power which she invested in her own teachers, she demonstrated that this came close to being overwhelming:

T5: At one point with [teacher X] I couldn't imagine really what point the playing was because he didn't you know.... What possibly could I add to that? And then I got my own career and got my own life, and I realised actually I don't quite want to play everything like that, I'm not him, I'm a very different kind of player. There's certain things again which you can hear... there are ticks I have which are definitely still there and which I'm very happy with but I don't play anything like him or [teacher Y].

The position of power invested in teachers, through contributing to assessment panels for students, offering professional work to students, and by being perceived by the student as a particularly successful performer was rarely commented on but could easily either reinforce or challenge a student's sense of trust. It may be that this conflicted with expressed desires to work collaboratively, but the power of the teacher did emerge, for example, in the ways in which they discussed their expectations of students. One teacher expected that her students would move into outstanding solo and chamber music careers (she herself provided a role model). Her work was therefore geared to achieving this goal. She acknowledged that she had an extremely short fuse with students who simply weren't working or didn't appear to want to succeed, and said that in these cases, after a while, she was happy for these students to stop playing and go into another profession. In between these poles of great success and choosing another career, there

was little alternative ground, little opportunity for lessons to explore avenues other than this particular career path. Although this might not matter in the context of high achievers with a consistently good match in learning styles with their teacher's teaching, within a conservatoire of any size, let alone within a professional culture currently undergoing so much change, it could be unrealistic to suppose that such a match was inevitable.

This teacher did not represent the norm. Others suggested that they were focused on facilitating the best in their students, at whatever level. One teacher was extremely sensitive to students' tendencies to worry (especially in the first undergraduate years): to worry about being wrong, and the consequent need to gain approval, often through pleasing and impressing the teacher. Nevertheless there was some evidence that teachers considered their own abilities to be measured by the success or failure of their students as performers, although their potential need for power in this respect was not openly acknowledged. For example:

T19: I think I wanted to hand on what I'd learnt.... because I did learn with some very good people, and I'd done classes, as I told you, with [teacher X] and with [teacher Y] and [teacher Z].... All sorts of wonderful people. I felt it was almost like a duty to hand on what I'd learnt to somebody...

This indicated a potential cycle of power, in which participants moved from apprenticeship to mastery and took over the role of teaching the apprentices.<sup>5</sup> Issues of power, however, were not, on the surface at least, an important topic, and the student's

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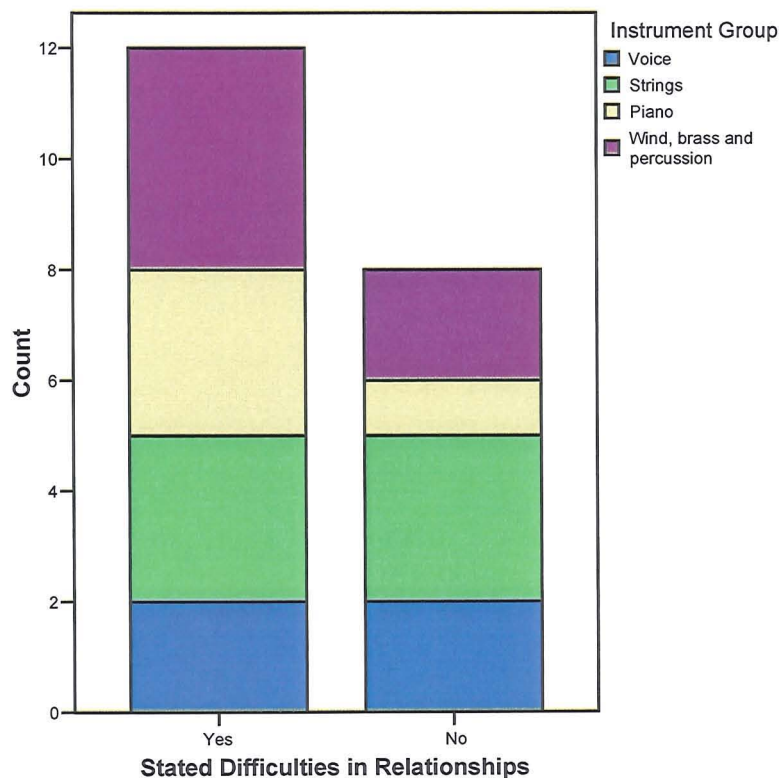
<sup>5</sup> In relation to power, few teachers discussed the management of anger in the teaching situation, but those who did made complex observations. For example, several indicated that they could not get angry in this context, either were not able to or could not be bothered. One teacher said she was unable to get angry in lessons, but felt that degrees of stress and fear could be useful for students in the one-to-one situation. There was no mention of encouraging a student's anger.

perception of power in the relationship and of appropriate boundaries to the relationship was not always obvious to the teachers: one teacher referred to personal feelings of a student towards him reaching an inappropriate level without him realising (and at this point requested the tape to be turned off).

### *Difficulties in the one-to-one relationship*

Given the intensity and expectations of one-to-one tuition, it was perhaps not surprising that more than half the teachers reported having difficulties with the one-to-one relationships. This is shown in fig. 10.

*Fig. 10 – Teachers reporting having difficulties with students, by department*



As one teacher demonstrated, the tendency was to deal with difficulties largely through

personal reflection as an isolated teacher:

HG: you said just at the beginning,... you are doing a lot of soul searching and questioning... what's been coming up?

T16: well, when they don't do as well as you'd like them to. Usually when they do well I don't really think about it, I'm just really pleased... it just really amazes me when they're not doing well... I start thinking what you could have done different or what you're going to get them do better next year.... All that sort of thing.... What hasn't happened, something like that..... There's a lot of that around at the moment.

Two teachers had spoken with school counsellors when they had reached a crisis point with a particular student, and reported useful results. Nearly all felt able to discuss problems with their head of department. There were, however, no structures within the institution formally clarified for assisting in dealing with problematic relationships. The soul-searching discussions about these issues, which characterised a number of the interviews, bore testament to the dedication and concern of the teachers, and to the need for support before difficulties reached a critical level.<sup>6</sup>

### *Different approaches to the boundaries of the one-to-one relationship*

Teachers dealt with the ethical boundaries to the relationship in different ways. A common suggestion was that "we all know where the boundaries are". In practice,

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<sup>6</sup>In other fields such as counselling, it would be considered unethical to have one-to-one interaction without formal structures of supervision and reflection in place, to share responsibility and facilitate cycles of action, reflection and planning. In this light it was significant that teachers identified confidentiality and trust on both sides as key components of the relationship, both also being conditions of a counselling relationship, yet none of them identified formal structures of reflection as desirable support for their teaching. Teachers also reported exhaustion as a regular consequence of teaching. Whilst a considerable proportion of this must be accounted for by working long hours, it also emerged that the intensity and emotional demands of the one-to-one relationship took their toll:

T5: .....I think this year what I have noticed is that coping with everybody's ups and downs has been incredibly draining on occasions because mine all do seem to be a bit nutty.....but I go for these types as well because they're often very interesting players.

however, some teachers wanted to maintain a certain distance, whilst others actively sought social intimacy with their students.

Some teachers did not wish to socialise at all with students, some avoided physical contact except with permission given by the student, others worried about being too friendly with students. For some the relationship extended into occasional social interaction, for example going for a drink after a lesson or performance, or into forms of friendship/patronage outside of the college: one teacher had a student lodger, another asked a student to babysit. The degree of distance, however, seemed to be largely in the control of the teacher, so highlighting the distribution of power in the relationship. Examples of the different approaches to the boundaries of the one-to-one relationship are shown in table 10. The distribution of opinions about social interaction is shown in fig. 11.

*Table 10 – Teachers’ descriptions of their social interaction with students*

<p><i>Social interaction actively sought</i></p> <p>T20: I’ve got lots of pupils who I’m very friendly with....there’s this lovely ... girl I have, she painted this room for me... they come here, we have nice days together, lunch together, ..... but they always treat me with honour, they never overstep a boundary with me, but I always encourage them to, if they are annoyed about something I’ve said, or if they feel uncomfortable, to be able to tell me that too. So I’m not the teacher and they’re the pupil, but of course there is a difference... if I really know them very well, they know where things are in the kitchen and I always tell them they can help themselves..... I mean they always clear up their stuff. If they didn’t, I would tell them.</p>
<p><i>Occasional social interaction</i></p> <p>T4: Occasionally I go to the pub, have a pint, to be honest .... I try not to make sure that’s not kind of a reward situation. I try to make sure that’s a social situation and not a reward situation “you’ve been good so I will buy you a pint”, try to avoid that - probably not always successfully, but sometimes. It’s just a</p>

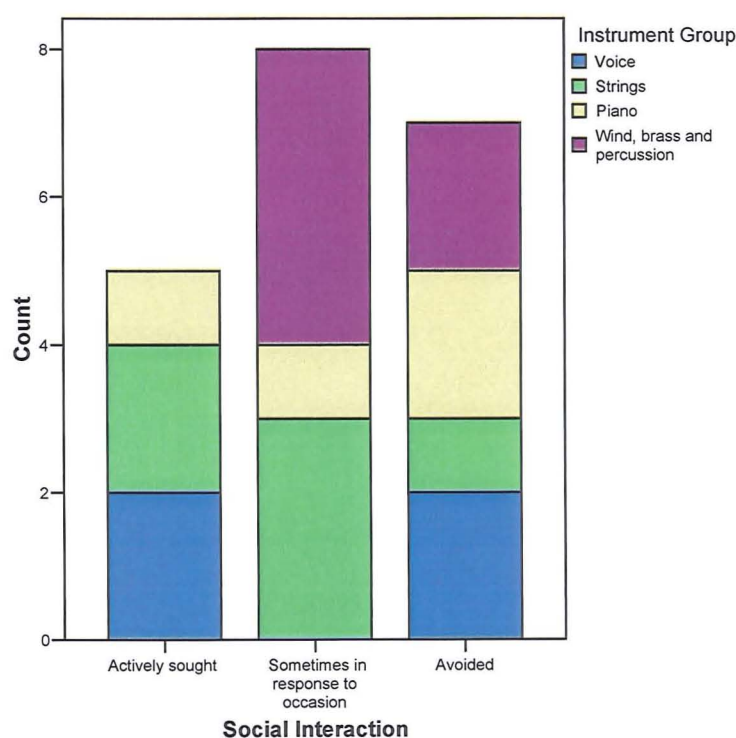


social thing at the end of the day, you go for a pint.

*Social interaction avoided*

T10: the boundaries are that I don't socialise with them...occasionally I get asked to, .....but no I wouldn't socialise with them, I'm twice their age. I socialise with people half my age again because I work with them, but that's different. So that's off. I don't think of it in terms of boundaries otherwise....

*Fig. 11 – Differences in the levels of social interaction engaged in by teachers with their students, by department*



## **The context of one-to-one tuition**

### ***The value of group learning***

In addition to the value attached to one-to-one lessons, enthusiasm for teaching and learning in groups was also expressed. First and foremost the focus of classes tended to be performance, in contrast to the detailed reflection-in-action which characterised one-to-one lessons:

T7: ...the class is a kind of half-way house. It's not a public performance, but lessons are mainly detailed work .....That is the whole difference between individual teaching and class teaching. Classes are performance-oriented.

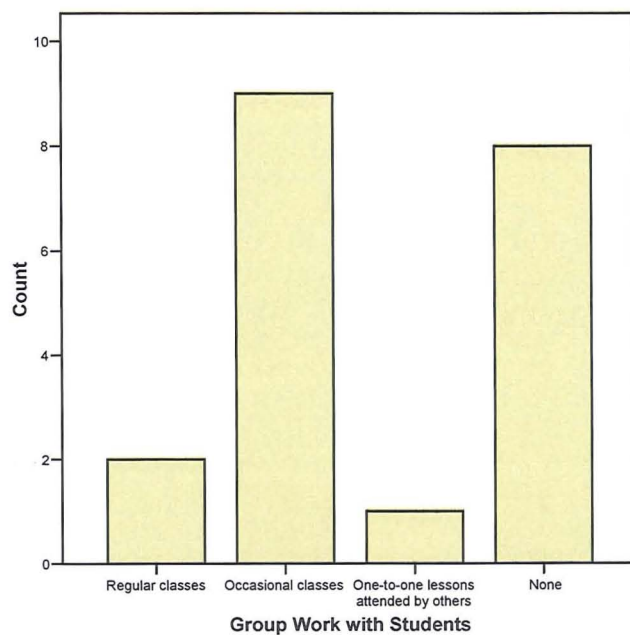
It was also suggested by a few teachers, however, that this was a way for students of a particular instrument to meet and spur one another on. A class could bring benefits such as economy of time used to explain technical and musical points, increased knowledge about technical issues and interpretational ideas, and mutual support gained from sharing experiences of playing, and skills learned in constructive critical evaluation of other students' performances:

T12: .... when they come together, they not only have to perform, but they hear me use the time very much more efficiently....I can say one thing once and everyone hears that. It also helps to break down this feeling that somehow facing your problems, you know your challenges, is something private that you keep from everybody else. Actually it helps them to see that everyone faces quite a wide range of challenges and difficulties, and there's nothing shameful about that.....all roads lead to the same gate in the end..... I try to do as little talking as I can in these classes and get them to assess each other...so one person plays and I get a reaction from the others, and try to build on that...hopefully somebody says the thing I'm most thinking, and then we can go on....

And what they're also doing, unwittingly they're also building up the ability to analyse themselves and their own pupils that they'll have, and see how they might tackle this or that piece.

Many teachers had considerable experience of running a performance class, usually with their own students. Relatively little of this, however, was part of current practice within the Guildhall School, and for many the problems articulated were concerned with logistics of student timetables, appropriate spaces and accompanists. Most teachers ran an occasional performance class, whilst only a few had regular classes or encouraged their students to attend one another's lessons. The involvement of teachers in instrumental/vocal group work is shown in fig.12. Some teachers were more involved in this kind of activity in other institutions where the arrangements were made for them, but at this school it was perceived to be difficult to structure regular instrumental group work within the curriculum.

*Fig. 12 - Instrumental/vocal classes taken by the teachers*



*Scarce knowledge of, or engagement in, the wider context of learning beyond the one-to-one lesson*

Relatively few of the staff had detailed understanding of what else students were doing within a course curriculum, and made little attempt to integrate principal study into these other aspects. Only those whose responsibilities extended beyond one-to-one tuition came into contact with other teachers and course leaders, and consequently had some knowledge of the breadth and depth of student coursework. It was not seen as the teachers' business to integrate their work in one-to-one tuition into a wider learning context for the student. Issues of time, and being part-time teachers were raised, but there was also relatively little sense of partnership in the education of an individual. Closest points of communication were usually with a Head of Department, who was seen as a source of support and a sounding board, or at times with the Student Services department, but there was less connection with other principal study teachers especially from other instrumental/vocal disciplines, musicianship teachers, or with staff from areas such as Professional Development and Music Studies, who had regular contact with their students.

*Practising*

Many different attitudes were expressed by the teachers to students' practising, and how much they were actively involved in this. For example, one teacher emphasised the importance of efficient practice and the teacher's role in enabling a student to develop this:

T9: ...they spend most of their time without me there, ... So just in terms of

practicalities, if they're going to spend however many hours just practising, a week, I spend very little time with them, so in terms of guiding them they're their chief teacher, not me. So I have to make sure they're equipped to teach themselves, to explore....and I think that's crucial.

The teachers who were prescriptive about practice said that they discussed how a practice plan was working with a student, but generally judged the quality of the practice by the results achieved in terms of performance. They had little knowledge about what was actually going on during practice sessions. In contrast, one teacher felt that it was important to let students get on with finding their own way:

T14: ... I listen to him practise and it's very difficult not to run up and say, "no, no! it goes like this!"..... I don't think there's any one way to practise. You are hopefully making your students aware that you're tackling certain problems within their lesson so that they will go away and think about that. Practice doesn't have to be practical, it doesn't have to be making noise, listening to recordings of themselves, looking at texts, looking at notes... it can simply be sitting down and having the tune bashed into your head. I've never advocated babysitting any of my students because that doesn't interest me.

Few, however, knew much about how their students practised:

HG: Do you know what they get up to when you're not around?

T12: not really. I ask them sometimes. I try to suggest ways to practice. Something tells me if they're taking that long to learn something they're not being economic ....

Seven teachers reported that they were prescriptive about what and how students should practise, but only four teachers asked students to demonstrate how they would practise during a lesson.

### *The benefits of teaching*

For many of the teachers interviewed, teaching was not an initial vocational choice, but was taken up at a later point, to stabilize a performing career, or as a result of being asked to teach in recognition of performing success. However, many had begun to identify in teaching key support for themselves artistically and personally. Teaching could inform their playing at a very high level, and could constitute a form of research, enabling them to understand and develop aspects which confused or troubled them as performers:

T19: ...well one of the main things I thought about when I decided to teach... well I knew my career hadn't gone as well as it ought to have done ... And I thought, "well ..., before I die I'll find out how to do it!" and I feel that was probably one of the things where okay I didn't do it, I know I wasn't doing it right, but let's find out what I should have been doing... so that's what I have been doing on all of these courses.

One teacher talked about always following the areas where he was learning most, this currently being a focus on teaching.

The thirst to learn was also evident, and nine teachers described the value they placed on professional development undertaken outside the institution at their own initiative. The ways in which these staff had become involved in professional development or support were mostly coincidental and not connected to the Guildhall School.<sup>7</sup> Such professional development usually also related to discipline-specific pedagogical issues more than issues of teaching and learning in the one-to-one relationship. The interview process indicated in several instances that teachers were thinking about some of the

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<sup>7</sup> This is gradually changing at the Guildhall School, with the introduction of research and professional development bursaries for part-time staff, and the increasing awareness amongst principal study teachers that these are both accessible and appropriate to their needs.

more generic questions about teaching and learning for first time. These were not a regular part of reflection, nevertheless teachers valued this experience:

T12: This has actually been very interesting for me because it's opened in some back cupboard in my mind all these things that once I was taught.

Much of the reflection in the interviews appeared to be open and self-questioning, but teachers were clearly isolated in the normal course of their practice as teachers, and were not engaged in ongoing dialogue and other forms of support. Perhaps as a result, the reflective process in the interviews tended to focus on outlining problems rather than articulating more complete cycles of reflecting, evaluating, planning and acting.

## **Summary**

The findings from these interviews indicated that the teachers had different aims in teaching, and that their descriptions of how they put these aims into practice were even more diverse than the aims. Their aims included establishing students as independent learners, and equipping them with a professional toolbox. It was not always clear, however, how the teaching techniques and approaches articulated supported these aims.

The characteristics of one-to-one teaching and learning relationships were also significant. The intensity and privacy of the relationship resembled the intimacy of personal or therapeutic relationships more than conventional teaching/learning relationships; on the other hand there were none of the structures of training or supervision here, which professionalize therapy. Considerable degrees of power were evident in the relationships although these were rarely explicit. At the same time

teachers indicated that artistic identity for a performing musician is a core and often complex issue, needing one-to-one support, but it was not clear that in fact the processes of one-to-one tuition did consistently facilitate students' self-confidence and responsibility in learning. The combination of artistic identity and one-to-one interaction suggested that both teacher and student were bound up in an intricate relationship, thereby making accountability for its success difficult to identify, especially without clear structures of ongoing support and critical evaluation.

The teachers were all highly trained as musicians and performers. Many were also experienced teachers, with a strong technical and musical knowledge base, but almost none had any training as teachers. Some were engaged in professional development at their own instigation, largely focusing on the pedagogy of their particular discipline, but did not consider generic aspects of teaching and learning in the same depth, even though they experienced some difficulties with individual students, struggling with communication in the one-to-one relationship, or with barriers to learning. As one-to-one teachers they expressed a large degree of professional isolation. In general there were few structures of ongoing communication between principal study teachers, and little engagement with the relationship between one-to-one tuition and the wider context of student learning in the college. Furthermore, when these teachers discussed their own teachers, there was strong evidence of the value of the different things they had learned from each of them, and it seemed that a variety of teachers over time, or even more than one concurrent teacher was an important factor in learning.



These findings resonated strongly with my own experience as a one-to-one teacher in terms of professional isolation, and teaching without specific training. The tendency for many teachers to focus on subject content and the minute detail of developing technical skill and musical understanding and expression, was also familiar from my own approach in the action research with oboe students (see p.29-30). My own discoveries as an oboe teacher had been that my desire to encourage my students' autonomy and self-responsibility as learners could easily be overtaken, and in some cases jeopardised, by the desire to impart my knowledge and experience. Similarly, data from the interviews with the teachers indicated that most teachers wanted their students to become autonomous as learners, but in many cases they assumed that this would happen as a matter of course, or that autonomous learning was more of a character attribute than a quality which might be nurtured and developed through one-to-one tuition. From this point of view, the differences in students' approaches to learning, their self-confidence and self-awareness as learners, and the ways in which specific teaching strategies might impact on these, were not discussed in any detail. Furthermore, perhaps in keeping with my own surprise at the degrees of power which my own students invested in me as their teacher, here the data from the teachers' interviews showed that the teachers held considerable power in relation to their students, but did not usually bring this to the surface within the interview. In reflecting on these data, therefore, I felt that not only was the issue of supporting autonomy and self-responsibility in learning one which extended beyond my own personal teaching to be a significant theme with all these teachers, but that understanding how the one-to-one teacher-student relationship may impact on this, and on the conceptualisation of one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition in

a conservatoire, was important to pursue.

The data from these interviews, and my analysis of these as a teacher myself, raised a number of important issues, but presented the evidence from a single perspective on one-to-one tuition. The next chapter, therefore, explores the perspectives of students, and considers the data from the interviews with twenty students studying with these teachers.

## **CHAPTER 5 - FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS**

This chapter reports on the findings from the interviews undertaken with instrumental and vocal students at the Guildhall School. All the students were either currently studying, or had recently studied, with one of the teachers interviewed. The process of selecting students for interview is described in chapter 3. Six areas emerged from the analysis: profile of the students; aims and professional goals; motivation and responsibility in learning; processes of learning; the one-to-one relationship, and the wider contexts of learning. These correspond to the key areas of discussion in the interviews, which were derived from the analysis in the literature review (chapter 2). In the extracts from the interviews the names of all the students have been removed. “S1:”, “S2:” etc. refer to each student talking, and “HG:” refers to the interviewer. In the bar charts used to illustrate some of the points raised in the analysis, the counts are shown in terms of the number of teachers in each category. The total count in each case is twenty. In the tables showing illustrative examples from the data, some headings are followed by a number in brackets, for example (3), indicating the number of students who expressed this kind of opinion.

## Profile of the students

The students formed a diverse group, in terms of age, previous musical education, the teaching they were currently receiving, and their own developing professional profile.

The demographics of the students are shown in table 11.

*Table 11: The demographics of the students*

	Voice	Piano	Strings	Wind, brass and percussion	Total
<b>Number of students interviewed</b>	4	4	7	5	20
<b>Age range of students (years)</b>	23-26	17-22	17-24	19-31	17-31
<b>Number of undergraduate year 1 and 2 students interviewed</b>	0	3	3	1	7
<b>Number of undergraduate year 3 and 4 students interviewed</b>	3	1	2	2	8
<b>Number of postgraduate students year 1 and 2 interviewed</b>	1	0	2	2	5
<b>Years learning principal instrument prior to coming to the Guildhall</b>	11-15	9-13	10-14	6-16	6-16
<b>Number of female students</b>	2	1	3	2	8
<b>Number of male students</b>	2	3	4	3	12
<b>Number of students with 1 current 1-1 teacher</b>	4	3	7	0	14
<b>Number of students with more than 1 current 1-1 teachers</b>	0	1	0	5	6

Not surprisingly, they had all been studying their instruments for a considerable number of years prior to arriving at the Guildhall School, so confirming the length of study required to reach a professional level as an instrumentalist/vocalist (Bloom, 1985). Of the two students who had only been working at their principal study instrument for six years, one had been studying other instruments for another nine years previously.

### *Patterns of one-to-one tuition*

There was a marked difference in the current patterns of one-to-one tuition for the students. All the wind, brass and percussion players had more than one teacher, up to a maximum of three. In the other departments, all but one of the students studied exclusively with one teacher, although the singers additionally saw a vocal coach on a regular basis, who tended to work as an accompanist and concentrate largely on the musical aspects of repertoire. The length and frequency of lessons also varied amongst the students, from an hour and a half per week for some of the wind, brass and percussion students, to two hours per week plus a performance class given by the students' teacher for the pianists.

Two exceptions to this were students who received lessons up to three times a week for between one and two hours for each lesson. These students were both in their first or second year of undergraduate study. The lessons were given at the discretion of the teacher, and were not formally allocated within the curriculum. It was clear that the lessons were appreciated, but that the extra provision was in the power of the teacher. In

one case, the frequency and intensity of the lessons also put considerable pressure on the student:

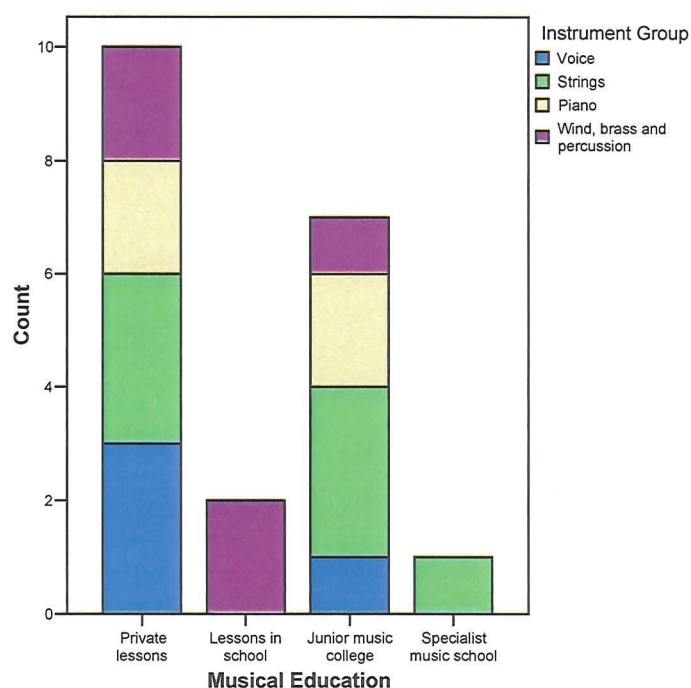
S5: ...in the beginning when I came here last year, it was like the first 3 months were all about basics, scales, studies, .... well, it's nothing do with music ..... Then we started to play pieces and to try to phrase, I like to find a timbre, to explore more things, and it becomes much more interesting.... we had short lessons, maybe one hour, or a bit less but every three days..... I couldn't let myself have one day off or a few hours, ... I felt that I must practise, practise....

Two students indicated that they did not receive their full allocation of lessons, or that they were irregular, and that this had a deleterious effect, especially in the first two years of undergraduate study.

### *Previous musical education*

The previous musical education of the students was wide-ranging, with the largest numbers having taken instrumental/vocal lessons privately or at a junior conservatoire department. Only two students had received their instrumental/vocal lessons at school, and one had been to a specialist music school. This indicated that in almost all cases substantial financial support had been provided to pay for one-to-one tuition for these students, confirming findings from Duke, Flowers et al. (1997), and having important implications for widening access which has become an important goal set by the Government Department of Education and Skills in the United Kingdom (2003). The details are shown in fig. 13.

Fig. 13 – The previous musical education of the students



Most students had learned with two or three different teachers for their principal study prior to coming to the Guildhall School, but there were also some more extreme examples. Details are shown in fig. 14.

Apart from the principal study, the students had also studied a variety of other instruments, including voice. Only one person had learned no other instruments, whilst two students had learned three other instruments, and ten students had learned two others. The most popular were piano and string instruments, but overall there was an eclectic mix. This is shown in fig. 15.

Fig. 14 – Changes of teachers experienced by the students prior to coming to the Guildhall School, by department

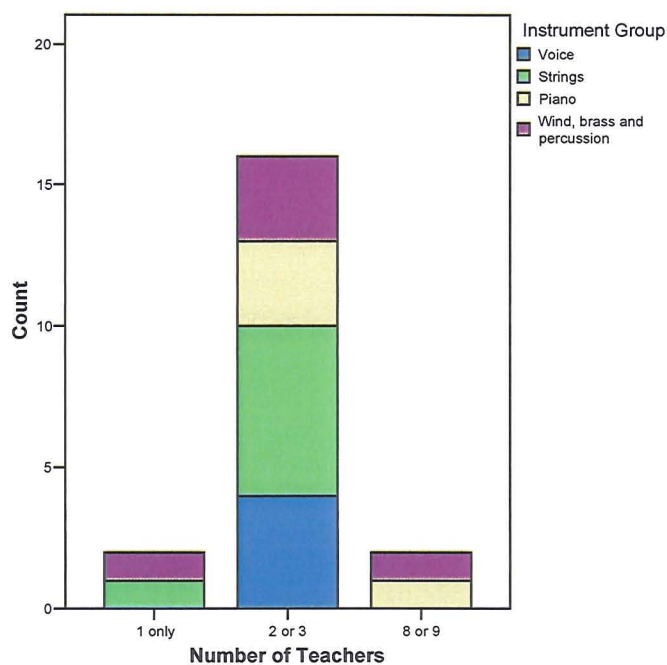
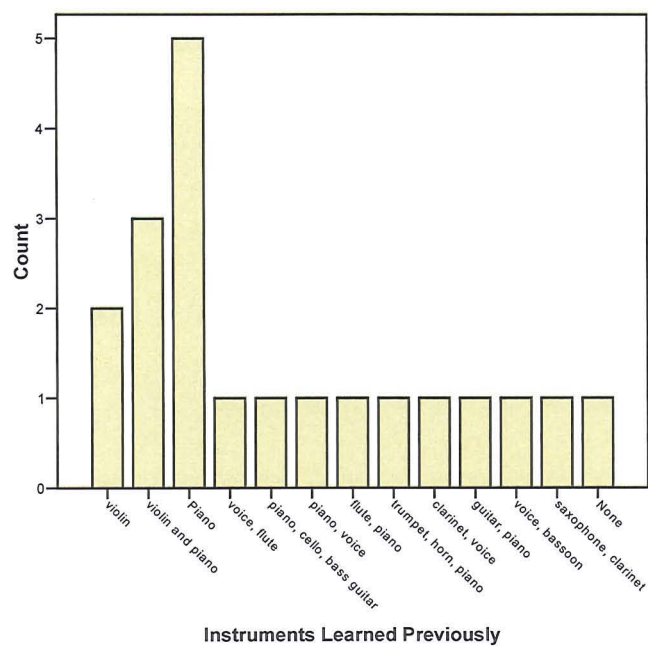


Fig. 15 – Instruments previously studied by the students in addition to their principal study





## **Aims and professional goals**

### ***Professional vocations***

The students were nearly all oriented towards a career as a professional musician. Some were more specifically focused than others. The largest group of students was not yet set on a specific path within music, but a few were dedicated, for example, to a solo career, or definitely wanted to pursue a portfolio career. Only one student had decided that, in fact, a career as a professional musician was not his first aspiration, and he had secured himself a job for the following year. One other student was unsure about his commitment to music. Examples of these different aspirations are shown in table 12, and the distribution of the professional aspirations of the students is shown in fig. 16.

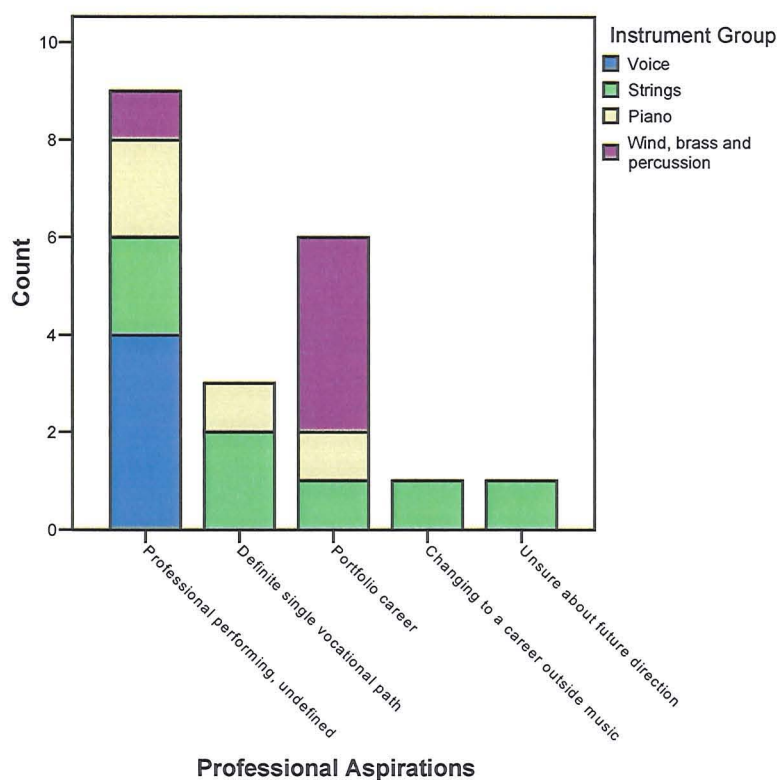
It was significant, perhaps, that in spite of being sure about wanting to pursue a career in music, nine of the students could not articulate more specific ideas about what kinds of work they would pursue, and were taking more of a “wait and see what comes along” approach. These were not exclusively the more junior students, some were close to the point of leaving the Guildhall School. The students’ aspirations were usually mirrored by their current involvement in performing and professional activities.

Table 12 – The professional aspirations of the students

<p><i>Professional performing, undefined specific path (9)</i></p> <p>S10: I would like to do a lot of things even in these four years. I would like to do a lot of things outside Guildhall, .... I know a lot of people in the ... music service, .... and eventually I would like to have a career in performing.... I think it is so important to go for any auditions.....</p>
<p><i>Definite single vocational path (3)</i></p> <p>S18: Yes, I am heading for solo career and chamber music, ... I am also totally aware of the kind pressures and amount of work that has to go into that, ... I think that I have the right potential to do that.</p>
<p><i>Portfolio career (6)</i></p> <p>HG: .... what do you feel that you are going to need?</p> <p>S3: To be a very fluent and flexible, modern ... musician.</p> <p>S7: ... there are so many different things I want to do, it's difficult really sometimes to know where you are actually going when you are like that as well. I definitely want to do teaching, and I will have to anyway, every musician has to teach.... I want to do some directing of some sort, but not sure what yet....I am very interested in music collaborating with the theatre, that is something I have got a real passion for actually, ... I enjoy composing and improvising, so anything that involves a bit of improvisation or some composition...It would be nice to play in an orchestra if I was lucky enough to get in, but it's not like number one on my list by any means.</p>
<p><i>Changing to a career outside music (1)</i></p> <p>S14: I think just being in the big arena ..., being here and getting to see what it is like to play in an orchestra, where you are all the same standard, has just given me a bit of an idea of what it is going to be like, and somehow it's taken some of the fun out of it for me.</p>
<p><i>Unsure about future direction (1)</i></p> <p>S2: ... up until now I have been thinking, if I can ....do a mixture of orchestra/chamber music/teaching of sorts, that would be great, but I am actually thinking I might take a year out first and not go straight on to do a postgrad.....I mean just a chance to kind of do something a bit different. But obviously keep up playing and try and have lessons at the same time, and then if I want to carry on. It is a bit of risk, I know,</p>

but I feel that I need to almost get out of the music college kind of feeling, and do something else, and then see if I'm absolutely wanting to do it as everyone else is, or if it's less ... kind of defined.

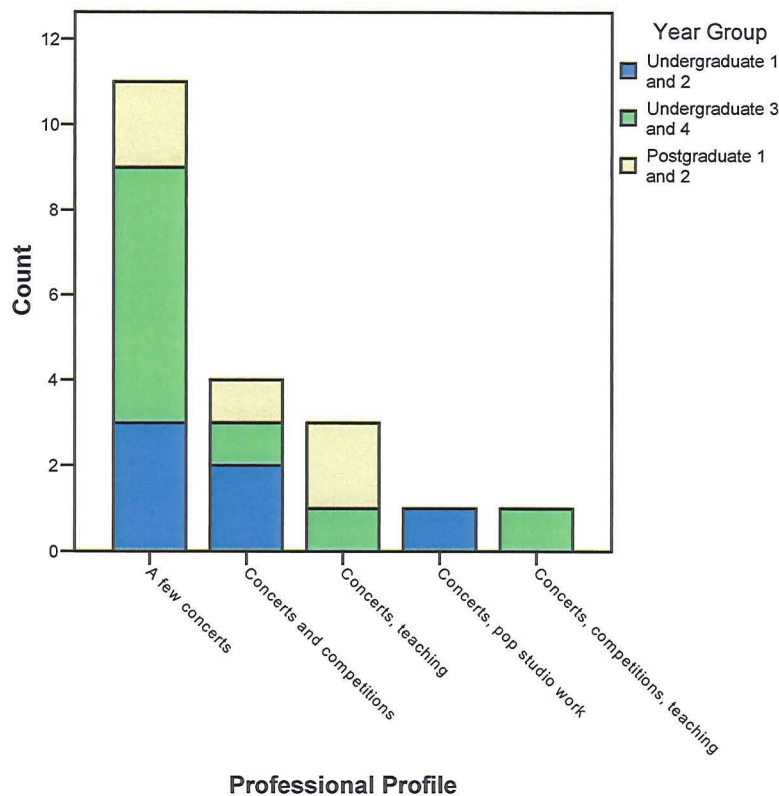
*Fig. 16 – The professional aspirations of the students, by department*



The majority took a fairly passive approach to this, and were involved in giving occasional concerts outside the college, mostly on a non-professional basis, as and when they were invited to do so. Only a few were more seriously proactive in attempting to develop a profile through taking part in national and international competitions, or through working professionally giving concerts and teaching. One was highly active with performing in concerts and working in a pop studio as an arranger/composer. Some natural progression was evident from the early undergraduate years through to postgraduate years with the students tending to become more professionally active. This

is shown in fig. 17. However, there were also exceptions to this, with two of the busiest musicians being first year undergraduates.

*Fig. 17 – The developing professional profiles of the students, by department*



### *The challenges of professional music*

Without exception, the students were aware of the potential difficulties of establishing themselves, particularly as professional performers. However at this stage this did not seem to deter them. For example:

S12: Well, my aims are ... to ... form as much of a professional career as I can ... I know that I have ideas, but there are so many pitfalls and there are not certainties in terms of a few years time. I would certainly like to postgraduate here if I possibly can, for a couple of years, and do as many competitions and to see where that goes and if that has a future. I certainly want a future as a player.

They realised that the future was precarious and little was guaranteed in an increasingly competitive market. Some said that they could not predict how they would progress, and consequently wanted to keep an open mind, and continue to study for quite some time if possible. For example:

S13: I suppose it's a bit of a jump into the unknown, just wanting to be a musician, it's a competitive field. There are so many, and so few jobs in the end, so I am not really sure at the moment, I think just see what happens. I'm sort of following the official academic routes of having done this undergraduate course, and then do a postgraduate course next year, then maybe aim for a [specialist] course somewhere....It's nice to have the structure of courses at a music college. The big question mark comes at the end of all that structure, what happens then?

As this student pointed out, a conservatoire provided a relatively safe environment compared with the unpredictable and potentially unstructured professional world. Only six of the students embraced the lack of set professional structures as a positive challenge, relishing the variety of activities it would bring. They were actively looking towards a mixed career, and were attempting to develop a broad range of skills which would enable them to adapt flexibly to a variety of opportunities.

Three of the eight students who were about to leave the School were thinking about strategies that they would use, for example utilising the time they would suddenly have to develop skills further, and to assimilate the intensive work of the previous years. One student, for example, concentrated on continuing to develop instrumental skills:

HG: How will you do that?

S4: Continue to practise, I might have a few more lessons, and try and play as much as I can as well, and try and keep the [chamber group] going.....obviously I won't have anywhere near so many lessons when I leave. But I think I am trying to take on board what they all told me over the 5 years. I suppose it is getting a bit more repetitive now,

what they are telling me, it is the same as what they told me before, so trying to think about that myself while I am practising, rather than relying on them to tell me.

However, whilst these students talked about taking responsibility for their own learning, and continuing to develop their musicianship in order to build up a successful career, they spoke little about actively creating work for themselves, and only one student, a first year undergraduate, mentioned the business side of being a musician and its influence on his choices. The processes of learning at the Guildhall School did not seem generally to be stimulating entrepreneurial or creative approaches to professional work. One fourth year student suggested that, if anything, she had experienced a process of becoming narrower in focus before regaining a breadth of vision:

S1: ... when I arrived ... I had as open a mind as I do now, which I think probably got a bit closed on the way, but it has probably opened up again now, - but now it is much more realistic, in view of what I want to be doing and how I can go about it...Really, I can't wait to get up and start working, and that's what I want to do.

### *The fear of failure*

How realistic the students' prospects were at this stage, especially those with unformed plans, was not clear. It was evident, however, that most of them considered the possibility of failure professionally:

S16: I think like everybody you sort of have doubts now, and "oh my goodness, this is a disaster - its no use" and so on.

Indeed the fear of failure could permeate much of the learning process. One student indicated:

S17: when I started out,...I put my teacher ... on a pedestal, ... she was quite a figure, I had heard a lot about her, so I think in terms of my respect for her, I looked up to her very much. In a certain way, I think fear was playing quite a big part of it, I think I was

always, I was actually worried. If I went to the lesson unprepared, what would happen, and what reaction that might encourage in her? So, I think fear has played quite a big part of actually ...taking responsibility, doing a lot more. Because I think standards with my teacher are particularly high, and I think that's what moved me on, and I think that's what has made us a good relationship too, is that with everyone as well, is that we all want to strive and get to really high standards.....

In this instance fear was a motivating factor, but in other cases it could also be distracting and inhibit learning:

S4: I think I pretty much knew what I was supposed to be working on, but again, I was always more worried about the exams than I was about what I was concentrating on, worried about not being good enough.

One student identified that a central goal whilst at the Guildhall School was to lose her sense of fear as a performer and musician:

S7: ... being free from any inhibitions actually, although that's not necessarily up to the college to do that, I think it does very well anyway in that way, it really trains us well to loosen up a bit.

Her feeling, however, that the environment of the Guildhall School was playing a significant part in achieving this goal was quite different from most students' perceptions. Fear of failure as an inhibiting factor in learning was more frequently identified, and this may have been linked to the ways in which students were already planning and developing a professional profile whilst at the School.

Given their existing levels of technical and musical proficiency, it was perhaps surprising that eleven of the students were not proactive about generating professional opportunities, and that they seemed to have difficulties in identifying careers which were both realistic and appealing. This may have been partly attributable to the

demanding ongoing processes of technical and musical development which made it difficult to step back and reflect on a broader and more long-term picture, to plan and take action. The students who were unsure about musical careers shed further light on this. The postgraduate who had decided to change career (see table 12), made this decision relatively easily during a year of postgraduate study. However, he had come from a university music background, which had been broader and less intensive instrumentally. In contrast, an undergraduate in his third year, was struggling to understand his own feelings and motivation towards being a professional player (see table 12). Moving away from professional music would mean a complete reconfiguration of his use of time, and giving up what seemed to have become a core part of his daily activity, and his personal identity. The detailed work and honing of instrumental/vocal and musical accomplishment was extremely demanding, and could have an overwhelming or all-consuming impact. For example:

S17: There is so much to take in, and I would come out [from a lesson] feeling absolutely gutted that we had only done two bars. .... I felt really, really not very happy, but that wasn't [the teacher's] fault, that was just because I couldn't cope with the fact that I had so much to do. And as you get further up the school, you realise that the better you get, the more there is to do, which I now find quite an exciting prospect, but in my 1st year I found that so daunting.

Consequently many students articulated a feeling of needing to prove themselves. There was an underlying culture of competition at the Guildhall School, and striving for the highest achievement in assessments, which often divided students in their own perceptions into groups with relative levels of success and failure. One student, in



consequence was on a “permanent quest” to disprove her Head of Department’s assessment of her, as she perceived it.

The role of the teacher in negotiating this culture seemed to be important. So, for example, in a case where there was a good match between the skills and aspirations of the student and the experience and expectations of the teacher, the student seemed to understand and be motivated towards the work required. In other cases, however, the match was not quite so secure, and tensions emerged between the demands being made in terms of skill development, and the particular interests and difficulties which the student experienced. Examples of the different matches between student and teacher are discussed in chapter 6.

## **Motivation and autonomy in learning**

### ***The effect of one-to-one tuition on motivation***

Motivation was a key issue for the students. This was to be expected, perhaps, given the number of years they had all already been engaged with their principal study, the intensive hours put into individual practice whilst at the conservatoire, and the amount of time devoted to working on technical details, requiring a great deal of repetition, often without huge outward signs of progress. There was some tension therefore between the processes of developing instrumental/vocal expertise and staying motivated and engaged in learning. Many of the students perceived their teachers to have an important role in helping them with this. Successful lessons could leave them feeling inspired, empowered and eager to practise; unsuccessful lessons could have the opposite

effect. Nearly all the students discussed ways in which their current teachers were motivating, and in most cases felt that the improvement in their own playing during lessons was an important factor in this. The examples of de-motivating factors all came from students who had chosen to change teachers and were more willing to be critical of the previous one. Examples are shown in table 13.

There were other factors in the processes of instrumental/vocal learning which affected motivation. For example, instrumental/vocal development was largely assessed in the conservatoire through summative assessment of performance, and consequently there was a tendency to be focused on what could be played really well now, rather than on presenting repertoire which was more of a challenge. In a lot of cases, decisions about repertoire to be learned were made in relation to assessment requirements and external performances. This left particularly little room for manoeuvre for the pianists and string players, in that their repertoire tended to be longer, and therefore more time-consuming to learn. In most cases joint decisions were made about repertoire, with some input from both teacher and student, for example:

S16: Usually [chosen] by me, sometimes I will bring things which I am working on in a class. So that's either something I have chosen, or something that has been selected for me by the person who is taking the class. But also my teacher will suggest repertoire which I can then bring along, or if I am doing a recital or something, then I will have generally have chosen the programme, usually in consultation with him.

Table 13 – Students' descriptions of motivation from lessons

Motivating aspects of lessons	De-motivating aspects of lessons
<p><i>Improvement in playing during the lesson</i></p> <p>S12: ... when this happens ... is when I go to a lesson and play just okish, and by the end of the lesson I am playing really well, and that's just great. I go home and really try to carry that on, ....</p>	<p><i>An atmosphere of not being good enough</i></p> <p>2S: ... with [teacher A], I felt very much I walked in, and ... I felt like a kid who has come in with muddy boots as it were, ... and I just couldn't stand it after a while because ... I didn't go away from lessons thinking "cool, let's go away and do loads of practice". I would go away from lessons thinking "there is no point in practising, because even if I do it like this he is still going to think its rubbish." Whereas [teacher B] I leave thinking "with hard work I might be able to do something here...</p>
<p><i>A positive approach</i></p> <p>S9: We always start off with exercises and things, and warming up..., but there is always an immense sense of fun which is something that I flourish on. I can't cope with the whole serious thing. I think that there is too much serious stuff in the world .....</p> <p>S9: ... he is always there for me no matter how badly I [perform in a lesson] he will always find something positive to say, ... I know if I suddenly had a panic about something I could ring him and he would say something that would make things better.</p>	<p><i>Not being challenged</i></p> <p>S13: ... it was a case of not really being challenged, I was always given music that I could [perform], not that I would one day [perform]. It was almost an insult that he used to just turn up to the lessons, and every week it would be the same piece, I think I only covered four pieces in the entire year.</p>

<p><i>Teacher playing in the lessons</i></p> <p>S3: ...they both play in my lessons quite a lot, and that really is inspirational...Both teachers might say “have you heard this new tune?” or “listen to this Debussy, it’s beautiful”. I have never heard it before.</p>	<p><i>Too narrow a focus, not playing what has been prepared</i></p> <p>S17: Well, I used to go in, and to start off you’d be really pleased, because you’d prepared this piece and worked really hard, and I hadn’t had a lesson for like 3 weeks or something, and I want to show her that I have improved. And you don’t get past the first two bars, and all these things that I had never thought of: line, connection from one note to another, vibrato, changing vibrato, different colours, all that kind of thing. She talked at you and “oh, my god, too much information” ....</p>
<p><i>Working on new, unusual repertoire</i></p> <p>S20: I did a piece by Lutoslawski, I have never played anything by Lutoslawski before, never heard of anything by Lutoslawski, and really enjoyed it, and it sparked off, it inspired me on the compositional side as well.</p>	<p><i>Being told exactly what to do</i></p> <p>S2: Yes, it was a lot of ... being told what to do..... we would just go through a piece, and sort of bit by bit, and he would demonstrate, he would just say “do it this way”, and that was what it consisted of. Obviously I needed, I was very behind technically, and I needed a lot of help, but it just felt very technical, and there was nothing exciting, he didn’t bother to make lessons fun and was dreadfully serious, and he was always frowning.</p>
<p><i>Student feeling able to ask questions</i></p> <p>S2: I can always stop at any point and ask her to explain something again, or if I want to ask her something it is very easy to do so, and it is not a case of “shut up, we’re working on this at the minute”, it’s very open, which is very important because then you don’t feel inhibited, and as a performer you need to feel very relaxed ....</p>	<p><i>Teacher answering the phone</i></p> <p>S9: ... he leaves his mobile phone on in lessons and answers it, ...It is just the one thing that you can kind of guarantee, that somewhere along the lesson he will be rung up by his agent, and “I’ve got to take this”, but it’s fairly minor really.</p>

<p><i>Teacher bringing resources for the student, and remembering previous lessons</i></p> <p>S10: my teacher would say, “I’ll bring you that sheet for next week” or “I will do that arrangement for next week” or “I will bring in that performance”, just little things and it does really help. I would spend the whole week looking forward to getting this recording ..., and it was really exciting. It’s nice to have a teacher who goes “last lesson we covered that and that and that, and how’ve you been getting on with that?”, as opposed to a teacher who goes, “so, what did we do last week?” ...</p>	
<p><i>Teacher helping to choose repertoire at an appropriate level</i></p> <p>S15: ... I picked one of my pieces..., but he gave me [title of piece] and it’s just perfect. It was obviously beyond me at the time, but not so hard I couldn’t learn it, but hard enough that it’s really exciting to play.</p>	

One student, however, talked about battling with his teacher over repertoire for an assessed recital:

S8: I said to [my teacher] “that’s what I want to do, and I will really practise and I really want to do that” and he said “come on..., you know you just pick yourself a reasonable programme, and stand up and do a really good job, and then do that”. But I said, “yeah, but I want to push myself” and he says “...this is not the time to push yourself, and you can do that any other time, just pick a good programme and work on that”.

In this instance, the student went on to describe “the penny dropping” and realising that his teacher was right, this was not a good moment to take on a big challenge. Playing well and achieving a good mark in an assessment could clearly boost confidence. At the same time, being presented with new challenges not only helped to give students a sense of direction and get beyond their current technical and musical limitations, but also provided great motivation:

S9: ... he said “there are no wrong notes, there are only notes that are more acceptable than others!” That kind of gave me the impetus, that’s “ok, I can do anything”, and he has thrown some absolutely massive, stupidly massive [pieces] at me this year, that I won’t be [performing] in public for 25 years, but it’s “have a go at this and see how it goes”. I will say “are you sure?” and he will say “yes go on, off you go”. It’s just nice because he seems to care about the future as well as the present.

The significance of sustaining a balance between challenge and ease, motivation and confidence through security, emerged from the interviews, but was not articulated directly by the students. They displayed little awareness of the need to create such a balance in their own learning, and appeared to be more reliant on their teachers for this.

### *Changing attitudes of a teacher affecting motivation*

In two cases, students described a change in attitude on the part of their teacher when they had been learning with them for a while. The change was designed to encourage the students to become more independent as musicians, but initially this had a de-motivating effect, as the student was aware primarily of the teacher seeming to be less directly involved, or to care less about them personally:

S5: ...he [teacher] changed a lot of his behaviour in the lessons, he wanted to wait for me to reach our aims and other things. He was more distant, he wanted to have less lessons, he wanted to be less in me, he wanted me to be more independent and do my things. So first I felt very bad, ... I didn't feel motivated enough....But I talked to him directly, I asked him... "OK, what is going on?", ... and he explained, ... and that was a bit shocking, because before I was every single thing he said, I was "ok - yes, yes", like a pupil.

This demonstrated how students could easily become dependent on a teacher, and then find developing responsibility for their own learning difficult. There could also be a conflict for teachers between the impulse to support a student with personal attention, and the desire to enable them to become more autonomous as learners. Particularly in the context of a student having experienced one-to-one tuition over many years, a period of reduced motivation might paradoxically be an inevitable part of developing greater autonomy in learning.

### *Students' awe of teachers affecting motivation*

Four students experienced strong feelings of awe for their teacher when they first arrived in the college. For some this was motivating, but for others it was indirectly undermining, as the student became overwhelmed with a desire to achieve the same

things as the teacher, and lost touch with the sense of their own identity and path. This became less of a problem as students matured, and was also diluted in a situation of having more than one teacher, which forced the students to think for themselves more:

S17:...you obviously think that your teachers are fantastic, and you worship them almost, particularly when you are low down in the school and you think, “wow, I want your life and want the way you play, I want everything”, and you expect them to help you 100%. Whereas, when you have got more than two teachers, you suddenly ... make the decision of what you are taking to them, do you take technique? They are not going to know if you don’t take technique to either of them, or if you take the same pieces - that’s completely down to you. ... it takes a while for you to get the confidence to say “no I am a person in my own right, and if I want to do mf here and diminuendo here, I can”.

The paralysing effects of being hugely in awe of a teacher could also be magnified by a sense of being overwhelmed by the teaching style encountered if this was markedly different from previous experiences. So, for example, one student described the teacher’s expectations of the level of detail with which technical and musical issues should be approached as an immense shock initially, leaving her bewildered:

S1: It was a huge shock for me, because I had gone from a teacher who said “right, you will do three hours a day practice, and you’ll do half hour of this, and half hour on this exercise” to somebody who went “yeah, right, so we are working on technique and we’ll just do this”. And I left the lesson and she didn’t tell me what I had to do, or how much practice I should be doing, and we might have only done two bars on a piece because I was working on one point of technique. I didn’t grasp fully that I personally should have done some technique and some [work on sound] and some studies.



The result of the focus of these lessons over two years, and the student's lack of understanding of them, was that she was left confused about her own connection to the instrument and her intrinsic motivation in playing: "I actually remember thinking because she wanted to work on technique, and that was a great thing to do because I needed it, I forgot what music was."

### *Sources of motivation outside of one-to-one tuition*

Outside of the context of the one-to-one lesson, one student described being motivated by hearing the older, more advanced students play, one by getting feedback from different experts after performances, and two students said that they relied on their own self-motivation particularly to practise, as this was not generated particularly by their teachers. For example:

S11: ....as a student I have tried to take charge of myself, and I have got away with it. And I have also been in a situation where I could have gotten away with doing absolutely zero for four years but I still managed to do the work!

In general, the students described being motivated by taking part in or listening to particular performances, but were less inclined to be motivated by other classes or their peer group. The majority of motivational impetus came from the teacher or their own inner resources.

### *The impact of teaching strategies on autonomy in learning*

Learning to teach oneself and taking responsibility for learning were not concepts which the students discussed directly other than in a very few cases. However, it was evident that aspects of teaching, such as positive feedback promoting self-

confidence, or questioning techniques which drew a student into discussion about interpretational ideas, were effective in facilitating greater autonomy. For example:

S2: Yes, but very often she might say, especially if it is a piece, she will say “what do you think you need to improve on this piece?”, and I will say something, and she will say “yes, I agree with you” and then really work on that. But she does ask me what I think as well....I think it’s good because she is encouraging me to think for myself, and not just rely on some amazing teacher to give you all the answers.

A technique of questioning was also used by this same teacher to scaffold a student’s reflection and discovery relating to technical as well as musical issues:

S2: .....there’s a phrase that’s always not quite right, she will say “... what’s the note that’s always wrong?” and I will have to think “oh yes, that one” and normally I will get it right. “Is it always sharp or it is always flat” and I sometimes get that wrong, “Am I going flat?”, “No!” [laughs]. And then she will focus on it that way, and once I have just solved that one note, probably the whole thing then slots into place....I think with musical ones she might say “what do you think needs to happen?” ... she is ... trying to draw it out of me.... if she doesn’t like how I have played a phrase, she will say “this way”, ... and I might say or argue my case: “Well no, I thought I would do it this way because of this” and we might argue it out a bit....

In some cases positive feedback was desperately needed as a support mechanism, for example when a student was panicking about a particular performance, or it could promote confidence so that a student was able to tackle more challenges and enjoy them. In other cases, feedback was most appreciated if it was realistic and specific. Used in this way, it clearly empowered the student towards greater independence and responsibility in learning, and was a good source of motivation:

S1: ... there is always a positive feel ..... she will normally have about two or three general comments, ... often if I have done it well, she will say “your intonation is

improving” or “your sound is very good today”, she will have a good thing and then something to work on.

### ***The impact of having several teachers on responsibility in learning***

The fact of having more than one teacher pushed the students into being more responsible for their own learning. They had to be more organised in terms of booking lessons with the different teachers while maintaining an appropriate pattern of input. There was less sense of one teacher overseeing their work, and they had to become more responsible for their own progress, choice of repertoire, and structuring of work. Whilst this could feel difficult to start with, it forced them to adopt a more mature approach.

## **Processes of learning**

### ***Differences between having one and more than one teacher***

Of the students who were working with more than one teacher in one-to-one tuition, all reported that they benefited from the diversity of what they were being offered. The potential danger of receiving too much information at any time was articulated by one of these students, particularly in the earlier undergraduate years or stages of learning. Once more mature as a learner, however, input from several teachers was seen to be beneficial. Other students, who only had one teacher, were also able to identify that they benefited from the different approaches which previous teachers and teachers in masterclasses had to offer. So, for example, a mature undergraduate student was ready to be exposed to many different inputs:

S16: I think I try to be as open as possible to whatever somebody is going to give me so.... if they say something and I just don't think it works, then I can take it or leave it, that's my choice ultimately.... I think that my background, perhaps school being quite obedient and doing what you are told, and I think as I have grown older and thought about things like that, I am still prepared to do the things that I am told, with the proviso that I can then go away afterwards and decide that was a waste of time and I'm not going to do that after all.

This student was able to weigh up the teaching he received on an ongoing basis, and reject the bits which he felt did not suit him. His attitude was shared by all the students who had several teachers, as inevitably there were times when what teachers suggested conflicted with one another.

This approach, however, was contrasted by six other students, whose sense of trust in their own teacher meant that they would do whatever was suggested, even if they could not immediately understand why or see the benefit. For example:

S19: .....it is much easier to be in a passive mindset, and just trust, it takes a long time to actually trust the teacher.... I would have thought it took the entire first year to trust my teacher, and then this year in a passive mindset, I have been able to actually see the progress I have made, just because I have gone hell for leather into whatever he has said, and thought "ok, well I will just do it and see what happens".

In this position it was difficult to take on board the input from other teachers. These contrasting approaches demonstrated both diverse approaches to learning amongst the students, and also different degrees of power invested by the students in the teachers. Nevertheless, all the students reported being content with the current arrangement.

### *Lesson structure*

Whilst teachers had different things to offer students, the students suggested that by and large all teachers adopted a similar kind of lesson structure and followed this consistently. Their descriptions were similar to those given by the teachers (see chapter 4). This structure was not commented on in any way by the students, rather it was accepted as normal, and they felt their needs were being met. Examples of descriptions of the lesson structures are shown in table 14.

*Table 14 – Lesson structures perceived by the students*

S9: We always start off with exercises, ...and warming up... [Then my teacher] will play, and I will [perform] the piece completely... And then he will say “that needs a bit more work” or some general comment or “that’s good but....”, and he will say “let’s start it again” and go through it, and stop every time there is a problem, and he’ll say “that’s not quite right, or you need to check your intonation there”....
S2: Well she says “hi ...”, and she’s very nice and friendly, and she normally gets me to warm up a bit, ... in another room, whilst she finishes with another student, ... she will always leave me for 5 or 10 minutes to warm up which is really good I think.... with other teachers I have had, I don’t like having to play one scale in front of them, and feel far too embarrassed to carry on warming up, because they are just going to get bored.
S10: ...normally we will begin with a study unless I am studying for an exam, then we will probably just start with the pieces straight away....It will be a study, possibly two, and we’ll talk about those, and then perhaps one piece for the first time, and another piece as well. I will play through it..... from beginning to end, if it’s really difficult and I am really struggling, she might stop and just say “let’s work on that bit”...

### *The relationship between musical and technical focus in lessons*

In general, the technical expertise and astute musicianship of the teachers were greatly appreciated by the students. They reported different points of focus amongst the teachers, for example three students suggested that their teachers definitely began from a musical standpoint, and four considered that their teachers were more focused on technique and the use of the body in playing/singing. Two students identified the development of processes of learning as a key focus in their lessons, whilst the majority felt that the teaching integrated musical and technical aspects. No particular approaches emerged as being more appreciated than others. Whatever the particular focus of a teacher, this seemed to be liked by the students, and in some cases they could appreciate contrasts between different teachers. Examples of the students' perceptions of the focus in content of their lessons are shown in table 15.

*Table 15 – Students' perceptions of the focus on content in their lessons*

#### *Technical focus (4)*

S16: I came across him at a summer school, ... doing classes ... very technically based, very specific,... this is happening here, this is happening here, ... and that seemed to click, perhaps that was my academic background.

#### *Musical focus (3)*

S18: I think he is a very astute, very dedicated musician, so ... when we are working on repertoire he knows exactly what he wants, but that is based on long experience of the style, and clearly he has thought about it before, which isn't always the case with teachers I've had in my experience. You know I'd bring a piece and probably know the repertoire better than the teacher. He has a deep musical knowledge which is very nice in a .... teacher, because you are not just getting the technical side, you are getting the whole package.

*Intertwined technical and musical focus (11)*

S13: [technical exercises] tend to be linked to what my problems with the pieces I am working on are ....

*Learning processes (2)*

S17: ... I think it was [teacher] who actually said to me in the 4th year, she said “you have got to eventually become your own teacher, and things that I am saying to you now, you should be thinking. So, I took more notice of things that they said about little things, like where crescendos begin, very basic stuff like that, which sometimes I still ignore.....so it was a mental switch, so I thought “right I am going to listen to everything you say and try and take this on board”. I got to the stage at the beginning of this year where I would go to [teacher], and I knew what she was going to say, which wasn’t a good thing because in a way, I should have already sorted it ..., and everything she said I kind of knew in my head ....

Most students reported that the focus in lessons was nearly always an aspect of musical and technical development, and in terms of a student articulating personal progress and development over time, this was seen to be more their own responsibility, and not something to be discussed with the teacher:

HG: It sounds as though also you are quite clear about your sense of progression and what you have achieved in the last 2 years particularly, in all sorts of ways. Is that something you discuss with your teacher?

S16: That’s more me, I think my teacher tends to focus very much on the music itself, and really being enriched by the music on its own, and in terms of development, yes, that’s very important too, but I think my teacher, ... seems to be very grounded in how music develops you.

***Successful teaching strategies***

In addition to the musical and technical balance of work in a lesson, the students identified key teaching strategies in lessons which they found particularly useful. These included singing a passage of music, without necessarily showing the detail of every note, but showing the shape and gestural impetus of the music; demonstrating

(although two students reported that with previous teachers they had found the demonstrations overwhelming as they were too frequent and only drew their attention to their own inadequacies), and playing the piano to accompany, thereby giving the student a more complete experience of the music. Examples of these strategies are shown in table 16. It was significant that all of these strategies clearly illustrated processes of collaborative reflection-in-action, similar to those described by Schon (1987).

*Table 16 – Successful teaching strategies reported by the students*

<p><i>Demonstrating with the specific instrument/voice (10)</i></p> <p>S1: She demonstrates a lot, but ...she does it in a really good way because she gives me quite a lot of options, and then we'll have quite a bit of discussion, ...and then she's like "well it's up to you in the end", but she often says "I think I would probably do it like this, but you don't have to". But that's really good, because then I get to see that there are a lot of different ways of doing it, and I can make my own choice...</p>
<p><i>Singing a line to show its shape or a particular expressive quality, rather than demonstrating on the specific instrument (7)</i></p> <p>S20: It's not coming out, and she then is able to say "this just says nothing", and she might sing it to me, show what the important notes are, and then I will try and do it, ...or I might say "well I was trying to do that" and she will say "it wasn't coming across". ...She won't sing if it is a complicated run that I am agonizing over that. She just [sings gesturally], she'll sing it that way [demonstrates again not worrying about every single note in a flourish] ...</p>
<p><i>Playing the piano in the lesson to accompany (8)</i></p> <p>S2: She will also play the piano, she is not a professional pianist or anything but she can play a bit....That's really helpful. If it's a concerto, she can play it, ... it's quite amazing because she often does it from memory, or even if I am doing a study.</p>



### *Communication about difficulties*

In general, the students accepted the teaching styles of their teachers without question, and did not feel that this was something to be negotiated. It was up to them as the student to learn as much as they could from the teacher, and only in extreme circumstances where the relationship was badly strained, or students felt they were learning almost nothing, did they decide to do something about it, and change teacher (this is discussed later in the chapter). Where a student was experiencing some difficulty in understanding, or perhaps wanted a different emphasis in the type of feedback being offered, this was generally not communicated to the teacher. Examples are shown in table 17.

*Table 17 - Examples where students did not communicate with their teachers about their needs*

HG: So, when you felt gutted after your lessons, did you ever communicate that to [teacher]?
S17: No, I didn't because I was petrified of her, there is no reason why, because she is so nice, but to me I didn't really know much about music until I came here, and it was like [teacher] 'goddess' .... I heard her in a recital and she was absolutely amazing, and I couldn't believe I was stood in the same room as her, let alone having a lesson. I think that all didn't help....
S7: Well, I will play something, and sometimes I'll just think "oh my god, that was so awful", and they will say "you know, it wasn't that bad", or "we all play badly sometimes" and say things like that. I would rather they just said "it was a bit crap wasn't it?" It wouldn't have to be nasty, but just be like in agreement.
HG: Why is that important to you?
S7: It is important to me, because it shows that they have faith in me that I can do better....
HG: Would you ever say any of that to them?
S7: I haven't.
S12: I like least the personal comments that I get, not just me everyone gets it, all of her students get

it....I don't feel that helps.

HG: Would you ever be able to say that to her?

S12: No, I wouldn't, because it is something which you have to learn to deal with on your own. It is something that goes with my teacher,....you just have to learn to deal with it, and it's something you have to block off.....my teacher wouldn't be able to understand if I said "look I can't stand the personal comments".

HG: Why wouldn't she be able to understand?

S12: I think, in the nicest possible way, I think she feels it helps you learn music, but it doesn't, and it's not something which you can address so much up front, you can't just say "look this isn't on, you can't say that", ... You can be a bit honest, we are all gradually learning to be quite honest with her in the nicest possible way, but not something where you take it so seriously that you really offend her.

HG: That sounds a little bit one way, ... she is allowed to offend her students, but you are not allowed to offend her.

S: Yes, it is a bit like that, I have to say.

### *Planning*

The planning which students identified largely revolved around the choice of repertoire to play, often determined by assessment requirements and/or external concerts and competitions:

S10: Basically we just work towards the exams as much as possible and put in some more fun repertoire in between....

There was little evidence that they conceived of planning in terms of personal development, the pursuit of professional skills or creative goals. This meant that it tended to be fairly homogenous, relating to short- and medium-term performance goals:

S19: Yes, a lot of the term goals are punctuated by the performances that I have been asked to do or that I have been able to arrange.

Longer-term goals had lower priority and less regular attention, and the students did not tend to articulate processes for reflecting on them.

Most students suggested that their teachers were closely involved in the planning of repertoire, although two students felt that their teachers adopted a more detached approach with this, which helped them to take more initiative, and to become more organised about their work:

S2: she [teacher] will just come in and say “what are you playing today?” It is really ...up to me to say “I have got this exam and I need to do this”, she is not going to chase me.... I think it is good, because ... I have got to organize myself, and I mean, she will definitely be very helpful but I have to say ..

### ***Monitoring and evaluating***

A number of students made audio recordings of some or all of their lessons (none used video), so that they could listen back, remember what the teacher said, and repeat particular exercises which they had tried in the lesson. This was used immediately, in the week following the lesson, and the tapes were not replayed much after that. Three students kept all or some of the tapes in order to be able to chart their progress over time. None of them imagined, however, that this could provide them with a resource for the future, for example of exercises and approaches to use with their own students at a later point. Other students indicated that they were insufficiently organised to record a lesson, even though this seemed to be a good idea:

S7: I keep thinking that it would be a really good idea actually but I never get round to bringing my mini disc player along.....

All the students were used to making odd notes and directions in the copies of the music they were playing. In addition, some kept a notebook in which they would

write down details of new music to be found, recordings to hear, or particular ideas and exercises which teachers had suggested. A few would write these down on odd scraps of notepaper. Two students kept some reflective notes on their own practising, and one had a special notebook for inspiring comments and tips remembered from masterclasses. Examples of these practices are shown in table 18, and the distribution of the students' approaches to note keeping is shown in fig.18.

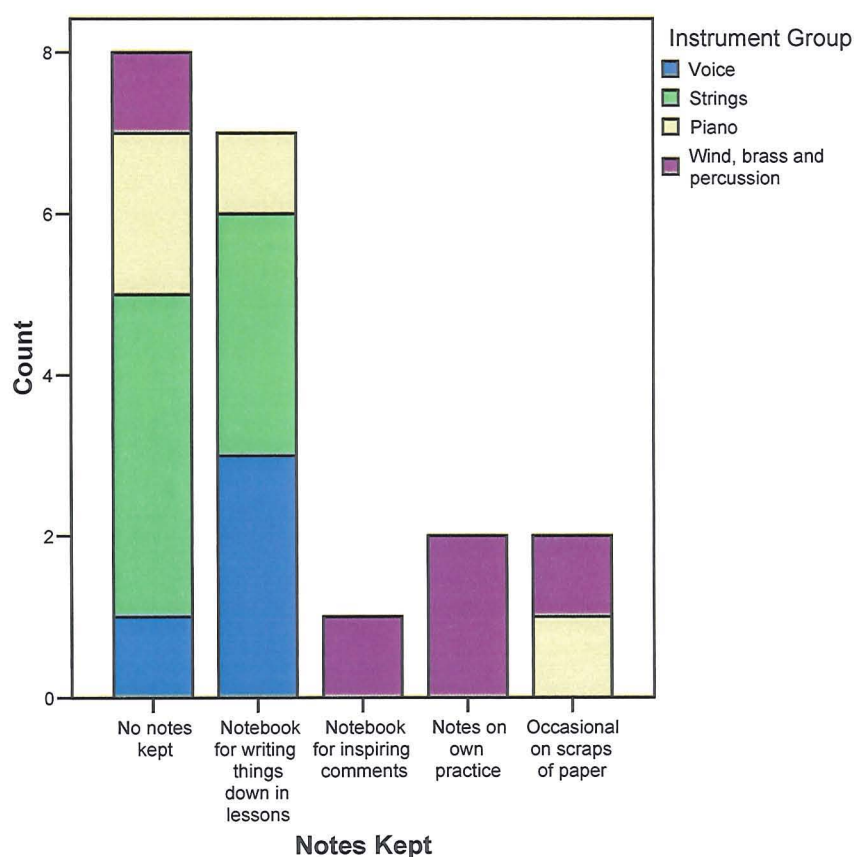
*Table 18 – Students' practices in terms of keeping notes about their lessons and individual work*

<p><i>No notes kept</i></p> <p>HG: Do you keep notes about your lessons or kind of log of what you are doing as a [musician]?</p> <p>S13: No, I don't...It has been suggested to me, [my teacher] suggested recording lessons, which I used to do, but my machine broke, but I've yet to buy another one, .....</p>
<p><i>Notebook for things to be written down in lessons</i></p> <p>S16: I will write down in my lesson what I have done, if there is something new perhaps ....I sometimes have taken a tape recorder or mini disc recorder to record what's happening, which is actually better as you can then listen back and actually hear what you have done, and try and copy. And you have all the details of what the teacher has said. It's just that practically, it is difficult to always take a tape recorder, and then it's also time-consuming in having to listen to it....I do keep a notebook.</p>
<p><i>Occasional notes on scraps of paper</i></p> <p>HG: When you write those things down, will it be on a scrap of paper, or will it be in a book that you keep for making all your notes of this kind?</p> <p>S12: Normally, just a scrap of paper, it won't be kept normally.</p>
<p><i>Notebook for inspiring comments and tips</i></p> <p>S17: Every time no, I didn't make specific notes, but every time I went to a masterclass or had a lesson, and somebody said something (this sounds really American) particularly inspiring, I have a notebook on all that kind of thing.</p>

### *Notebook for use with own practice*

S7: ... what I have been trying to do, so that I don't waste time when I am practising, is write down all the different types of scales that you can possibly do with [a specific technique] for example. Because that is my kind of main goal this year, is to get better at [this technique] because I have been really weak there.

*Fig. 18 – The types of notes kept by the students, by department*



In general it seemed that most students were not engaged in processes of reflection-on-action through a written medium such as a reflective journal. Nevertheless, a few of the students were aware of internal processes of self-evaluation which were

ongoing for them all, and which had a substantial impact on learning. One student, for example, talked about the lack of a critical approach in practising:

S4: I know someone who spent hours and hours in the practice room every day, but ... they didn't get any better...First learn to be self-critical, I think that it is the hardest thing isn't it, and not just acceptance, if you play something think "oh, that'll do" - but you've to always try and think of ways of improving, without beating yourself up too much about it, so that you get into ... "I am not good, I am rubbish".

Another student emphasised the tendency to be excessively self-critical:

S1: ... people can go through real lows because they just criticize themselves so much, it's just not helpful, and then everything about even their playing ... just goes splat.....I just basically kind of tried to have a life outside of music as well, that happened in my third year because ... I just almost left Guildhall in my second year, because I think I was being so self-critical it was ridiculous, and I wasn't getting any enjoyment out of it any more...

Her difficulties with self-criticism nearly led her to give up the undergraduate course, and reinforced the feelings of not being good enough and low self-esteem which in turn contributed to her fear of failure. This student indicated both how the environment at the Guildhall School could threaten self-esteem, and how the self-criticism could block out attempts by teachers to be positive and supportive:

S1: ... I have been so self-critical that I can't even take any encouragement, because I've really just thought that things were so rubbish....I think that there are so many great players, and it is very difficult, you know I am sure that everyone goes through this who comes to music college, you just open your eyes and think "oh God", and then it is very difficult to kind of justify to yourself just being here, almost.

However, only a few students articulated processes within their lessons which enabled them to develop positive critical self-reflection.

## **The one-to-one relationship**

### *The benefits of one-to-one tuition*

All the students had a high regard for one-to-one tuition and the benefits they felt it brought them, (although one student who was at an advanced technical stage felt that there was little difference in the kind of input she now received in individual lessons and performance classes). Essentially, students suggested that the teaching interactions could be entirely focused on an individual, and his/her particular needs in the fine-tuned development of instrumental/vocal technique and musicianship:

S13: I think it is very important we do have a regular one to one sessions just because what he [the teacher] says to me might be very different from what he would say to another person whose at a different stage of ...development ..., so what I am being taught is, I presume, and I do feel, is geared to what [I] can cope with, or what [I am] going to do...

The continuity of a single approach was also appreciated by a few students, ensuring that different techniques and styles did not become confusing or paralysing. This, however, was not the case with the six students who had more than one teacher. Interestingly in one instance the need for a single technical approach was attributed to the teacher rather than the students:

S16: Technically it [one-to-one lesson] is certainly more detailed, because we don't have technical work on a broad scale [in classes], technical work is left to the studio for teaching, that's the idea because teachers have different technical approaches. I think that class teachers tend to feel that they are not going to interfere because it could be a problem.

For a few students one-to-one tuition also reduced the potential for competition, allowing them to go at their own pace, for example:

S2: I feel it's very much me developing at my own level and at my own pace, and being pleased with the progress that I make rather than comparing myself to everyone else, and I feel very happy about that. I feel I can't go around saying that I am not as good as so and so, and I just need to carry on and try and get as good as I can ...

Another benefit for many of the students was the feeling that a teacher would champion them, and become a source of long-term support:

S9: I think that there is a good basis here of staff, that if you rang them up they would be willing to help you, I think. If I rang [my teacher] in 10 years time and said "I am having problems learning this Handel, will you help me", I think that I can guarantee that she would.

Furthermore, in the cases where a teacher had a particularly good reputation, there was the feeling that becoming their student could increase the chances of success:

S16: ...my current teacher ... has a very strong reputation, and he has had a lot of successful students in the past. So obviously that also influences people in deciding to go to him and yes, I guess that puts him in a little bit of a halo.... [with him] I will be successful, perhaps he will spot something in me just as he spotted something in X person who has gone on to do this.

### *Characterisation of a professional/personal relationship*

The human aspects of one-to-one tuition were clearly significant, although not necessarily always easy to negotiate. As one student pointed out:

S16: ...you are working with a teacher. If you are a researcher you are working with a book, so the book doesn't even talk back to you.

Students characterised the relationship in a number of different ways, and articulated different expectations from it.



There was a divide between students who felt it was more appropriate to keep the relationship on a professional basis, and not to socialise with the teacher, and students who socialised regularly with their teacher and felt that this was beneficial. In one instance a student appreciated the social relationship, and felt that this had helped to transform her, also in terms of personality: no longer a wallflower, she now participated in classes much more and was not afraid to voice her opinions. Other students did not socialise with their teacher at all, and the relationship was kept professional at all times. Examples of the students' perceptions are shown in table 19, and the distribution of student attitudes to social interaction in the one-to-one relationship are shown in fig. 19.

*Table 19 – Students' characterisations of the teacher-student relationship*

<p><i>Individual relationship and personal rapport</i></p> <p>S19: I feel it is very individual because every student is different, and the teacher has to respond to that individual, so I feel treated as an individual, and tailor-made basically,... and that makes me feel very special ... And there is no such thing as a prototype or model that you can impose on every student,</p> <p>S6: I would say a relationship between the teacher and the student on a one-to-one basis is always more personal than at a university ... So, I don't know, we have been talking about this in teaching skills as well, what the ideal balance is, and if a student comes in with worries, ...they've had a few very bad lessons in a row, whether it is the teacher's responsibility to dig in and ask, until something comes out, and that might explain why the student's work is not so good as usual. ...I don't know what the ideal relationship, should be professional of course, but I don't think it can be just.....</p>
<p><i>Belief and trust, and the ability to argue with the teacher</i></p> <p>S5: Well, I think first of all you have to kind of believe in him, like if you start to doubt in what he is saying, you are not going to try hard, ... I realize now ...I am a bit more distant because I see him as</p>

a person, before it was like my teacher, like, I don't know, somebody from on top, I mean upper than me, or something like that. I followed him without thinking really, because I thought he was right, but now I see more subjectively.....we talk about music and I have my opinion and ....we argue..... he has lots more experience and has played much more stuff, but still I think ... sometimes I am right and he is wrong [laughs].

### *Personal liking*

S2: I think it's really to do with her attitude really towards me and how she treats me. Yes, she is a great teacher, but I don't think I would benefit as much ... if I didn't get on with her personally, and just the fact that she treats me like an intelligent, grown-up, rather than some naughty little boy who can't play in tune!

### *Formal*

S13: I would say that our relationship is quite formal... I think I like that more than with [teacher B], I got a bit too involved. She was going through a tricky time, ....and [it] took a while. I found that I was talking about that in my lessons when I'd travelled an hour and a half to get there, and it was not on.

### *Social relationship valued*

S9: ... we have a kind of professional relationship and then a personal relationship, because the lessons we just work, but then if he's in the country, he will say "let's go out for a drink" .... That's when we will talk about what's going on in our own lives, and there is a whole group of us, ... we were out last night, and we sit and gossip, and he knows what is going on in the other side of my life. He doesn't just care about me as a [musician], and I think that's important.

HG: That is important to you? Some people don't like that.

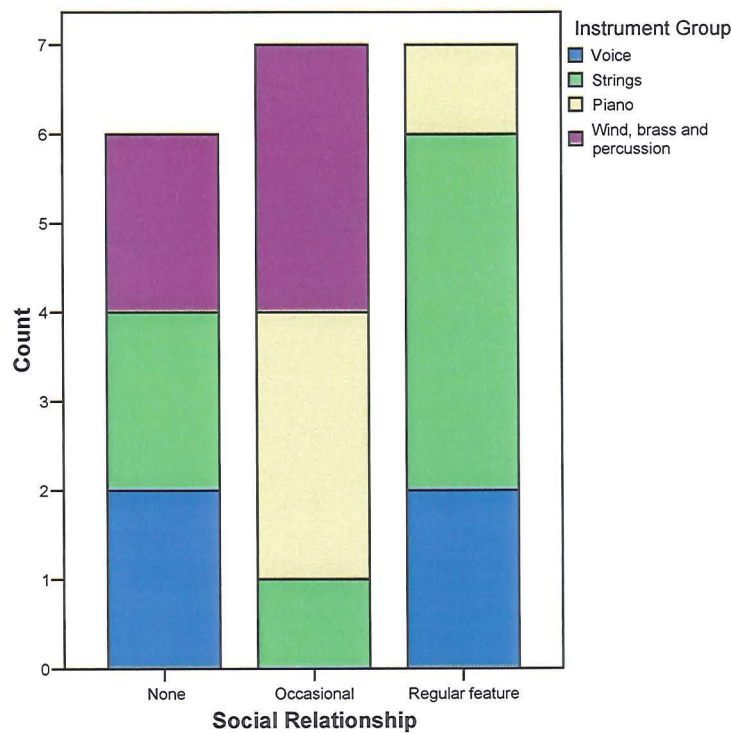
S9: I am sure that some people don't actually, there are a couple of people that don't come out with us...

### *No social relationship*

S15: I would say boundaries are, you should always keep the relationship of "I am your teacher" in a positive sense..., meaning: they should be your friend and you should be friends with them, and be approachable, but you don't need to spend time with them as a friend. You are friends in the teacher-pupil relationship, that's it. But yet you know, it's slightly more than that when you leave that relationship, you can still be in contact every so often, you are still going to, you know, look out for each other. I think it's that boundary where you know you are the teacher, ... you are always a friend within the context of the teacher, but you wouldn't then try to push any other type of friendship. If the pupil wanted that type of friendship, then you would treat that really warily, because there's

normally a big age difference, life difference, not appropriate.

*Fig. 19 – The distribution of students in terms of engaging in a social relationship with their teacher, by department*



Although the views expressed about the importance, or not, of getting to know the teacher on a personal level were radically different, all of the students interviewed seemed to be comfortable in their current teacher-student relationship, and did not complain about the balance of professional and social interaction. The type of interaction, however, seemed to be largely instigated by the teacher, and the students

tended to accept the teacher's view, trusting that this would be the most beneficial for them.

Respect for a teacher was described by ten of the students as being an essential ingredient in the student-teacher interactions. Trust was equally important for eight students, key to enabling the development of real expertise, and drawing out the particular potential of the individual:

S19: I come to him for his expertise and so he's going to teach me what he can and mould [my potential] the way he sees it could go.....Yes, I suppose as a student you feel that you have got more input, you are taking your own path as it were .... At least leading where you are going. So that is a perceived strength, but it probably isn't a strength ultimately because ... you can't hear yourself and the other person can, so I think, just putting yourself into someone else's hands is probably the best way to go.

Framed in this way, trust also brought with it a degree of dependency on the teacher:

S5: it is really important to be able to trust your teacher because they know a lot more than you do, whatever you might think.

Such dependency seemed to be a feature counteracting teachers' intentions of autonomy and responsibility for learning in the students. On the other hand, two students talked about the process of trust being reciprocal, and this giving the student the space in which to be themselves and grow:

S: ...that is just purely a means to the end, him trusting you as a musician and trusting that you can manage yourself, and you will grow. You just need the experience and time.

### *The boundaries of the one-to-one relationship*

In most cases, questions about having boundaries around the teacher-student relationship elicited confused, unsure responses. It was perhaps difficult to understand what this might mean, and it was evident that for the most part this was not something which was discussed with a teacher. Two students said that they did not know what the boundaries could be, and two more suggested that there were not any boundaries that they could think of. Most of the students held their own particular views, although the boundaries which they indicated were generally not explicit (one student talked about “unwritten rules”). Nine students suggested that they did not want their teachers to get involved in discussions about personal aspects of their life; three students who had strong social relationships with their teacher(s) were also quite clear that the personal side of their lives should not be the subject of discussion during lesson times; two students focused on the intensity of the teaching-learning process, and suggested that it was the responsibility of the student not to take on board anything which was actually going to be damaging psychologically; and one student indicated his distaste for the way in which some students used their position to try and gain favour and perhaps professional work from their teacher(s). Examples of the students’ attitudes to the boundaries of the one-to-one relationship are shown in table 20.

*Table 20 – Students’ perceptions of the boundaries around the one-to-one relationship*

<p><i>No boundaries, but unwritten rules that personal aspects of the relationship do not fill lesson time (2)</i></p> <p>S19: I don’t think that there are any boundaries really, it depends what the situation is... what we are talking about, ...last year I had a tough time, because I got a very low mark in my final recital last year, and had no idea why this was and neither did he, and it was very difficult to have to tackle this, and we were very serious and very business-like in that sort of thing. But normally there are no subjects which are taboo and it’s just a good friendship, quite happy to go out for a drink afterwards, and he does insist that most of his students do go out for a drink after a day’s teaching. I think we all need one and yes, just socializing, going to concerts, and going to barbecues ...</p>
<p><i>Student’s responsibility to establish boundaries (2)</i></p> <p>S16: It’s as much dependent on the student as it is on the teacher perhaps. How much the student is going to let their teacher ....in psychologically, or take on board what they are going to say.</p> <p>S12: I personally like to keep the personal side out. She [the teacher] actually would probably like to know, but ... I think that the lesson should be serious and shouldn’t be too getting involved with you personally. I mean ... part of her teaching is a lot of personal talk, and talking about my psychology ...and she does tend to ...tune into people’s psychology, ...and then she feels that sorts you out in terms of how you approach learning. But in terms of ... other personal aspects of my life, I prefer to keep that away from the lessons, because I don’t feel that the two go together.....She will say “you have got no concentration, you are a very nervous personality”. Sometimes, when I was younger... these personal things would creep in, and she would make really, really personal comments about my lifestyle or something like that. And that’s very harsh and very hard to take, and I think you learn, but I personally learnt to have a really strong constitution about it and just block it off. I think to a certain degree you have to take the thick with the thin, and let it go in one ear and out the other! And just simply concentrate on the music ...</p>
<p><i>Physical touch expected (6)</i></p> <p>S8: I don’t mind [physical touch].... No, I wouldn’t expect them to ask [permission], but I have always been asked because they know that it can lead to problems, some people don’t respond well to it. But again, going back to [performing] being such a physical activity, I think it helps if they let you feel what they are doing physically.</p>

*Student not wanting to be known on a personal level (9)*

S9: her methods don't really work for me, because she desperately wanted to get to know me on a personal level and wanted to basically befriend me, and she did it in a kind of slightly weird way. I don't know, she was trying to make me less of a [musician] and more of a different person, by saying things about the way I respond to her and the way I respond to other people and respond in class. She would sit there and go "no, no, you should respond like this" ....

*A strict approach in a teacher runs contrary to the nature of the personal and intimate engagement involved in being a musician (1)*

S3: I can't stand teachers who.....are stern just to be scary..... it's such a personal, such an intimate thing to be a musician, I think, it's really bad, I think I would find that totally unacceptable and I would have to change [teacher],.....I have seen and heard of teachers who are like that, but only because they are extremely strict.

*The importance of a student being prepared (2)*

S20: I think the most important thing is to actually be prepared - it seems so simple, but to actually do the work, because if you are not practising, if you're not working hard, then frustration for the teacher is going to be there for sure. They are going to be giving you all this stuff, they want to see you progress and you are not, so I have tried very hard to work hard this year. That way the lessons are worthwhile, there is a lot to talk about, the teacher can give a lot, you can respond a lot, you can also give a lot back, there is so much more if you have done the work.

*Not liking students "creeping" to teachers (1)*

S8: When you are at this level and you are at college, I think that creeping around your teachers - I have experienced that in [my previous job], where people have crept around the senior [staff], and then I got passed over a couple of times. ... I absolutely hate that. I think it is vile, ...every time I see someone do it and every time I hear it, it makes me feel like sick to the core in a way, because there is no need for that. If you get on with someone, you are going to get on with them, you don't have to change your personality, ...they just accept you the way you are.

All these examples showed that most students did have a sense of limits to the relationship. However, with these being so differently expressed, it could not be assumed that there was a shared understanding about them, rather if the students did have an assumption of shared understanding about the boundaries to a relationship, this was underpinned in reality by diverse perceptions of those boundaries.

### *Characterisation of effective and less effective personal qualities in teaching*

A number of specific personal qualities in teachers were described by the students as particularly effective or inhibiting, including toughness, a caring attitude and real interest in the student's day-to-day life, and a feeling of being distant. Examples of these are shown in table 21. Whilst some of these characteristics were common to many of the students' perceptions, others, such as a rather abrupt manner, motivated one student to work hard, and made another feel uncomfortable. This underlined the importance of the individual match between teacher and student in relation to teaching and learning strategies and the conceptualisation of the one-to-one relationship.

### *Negotiating difficulties in the relationship with a teacher*

In all cases, the current match between student and teacher(s) seemed to be working well, and the students were happy in the relationship(s). Eighteen of them, within this context, felt confident enough to be able to try and talk to a teacher about concerns they might have about the relationship and their own development. For example:

S1: If you have the relationship with the teacher and you feel you can talk about it, then do, and if you don't feel you can talk about it then it's probably not the right teacher for you, because ... they are too strong a personality perhaps or they are blocking some kind of ability to interact.



Table 21 – Students' characterisation of effective and less effective personal qualities involved in teaching

Effective personal qualities	Less effective personal qualities
<p><i>Critical</i></p> <p>S16: [my teacher] can be quite harsh and has a reputation of being tough and ... very critical. He can be quite direct to people, and I think if you go to him knowing that, that's fine, and you know what to expect. So you are certainly on the edge during the lesson, you have got to get it right.... if you do something, he will tell you how to do it better, and if you don't do it better, his glasses will drop? to the front of his nose and "why are you doing this?" and that sort of thing, "why can't you do it?", and so on. Intellectually that's great because it keeps you on the ball...., you end up really trying very hard, working hard...</p>	<p><i>Distant</i></p> <p>S2: what I don't like about [my teacher] is sometimes she can be quite distant and it can switch quite quickly, but sometimes if I do want to talk about something to do with my music, but just a slight aside, she may not, or sometimes isn't helpful, or sometimes if I ask her things about maintenance of my [instrument] or something she doesn't seem to have too much knowledge, or she just says "oh".</p>
<p><i>Caring about student's daily life</i></p> <p>S4: ... [my teacher] will speak about how the week has been, "how are you feeling, are you tired?", little things, silly things but ... I think what we do ...can be really affected by small things and ...you need to have a focus for it, and anything else which is a distraction in your life, obviously, you don't need to pour out your heart to your teacher but.....</p>	<p><i>Abrupt</i></p> <p>S9: No, her teaching was a little abrupt and a bit kind of almost forceful in some ways ....I had serious posture problems when I [performed] when I first got here, I was very apologetic, and when I got up it was like (slumps), "I will [perform] from this position because it is comfortable and I feel safe". She's like, "no you will stand bolt upright against the wall while you [perform]", and she would just kind of put her hand there and push me upright. It was like "ok I am here not daring to move."</p>

*Sense of humour*

S12: I think a sense of humour,... that's very important, being able to laugh, laugh at yourself and laugh at others, and also respect...but even if something is wrong, or a rhythm's wrong, or I have learnt something incorrectly, then sometimes we will have a laugh about that, but sometimes there won't be. There will be no laughs and it will be a serious matter, so it is a bit of both.

*Unpredictable atmosphere*

S13: ... sometimes she could be quite patronizing and I didn't like that, and she was unpredictable, ... I always would be going into my lessons thinking "is it going to be good or is it going to be bad", that kind of uneasy feeling, and so she could be quite intimidating and very much "I am never wrong!"

This student clearly felt resourceful, and empowered to act if things were to go wrong. He had in fact himself negotiated a change of teachers, and had discussed this directly with the teacher. Both teacher and student had handled the situation professionally, and there had been a smooth and apparently successful transition. He also identified the Head of Department as a useful person to turn to for support with general difficulties. With specific technical things being taught he thought that: “perhaps I would talk to my old teacher or talk to another singing teacher or someone else who has had experience of that technical issue. They can tell me if ‘yes it is problem’, or ‘no don’t worry about it just now’.” This was a mature student who perceived and had tested an integrated and functional support network.

Four other students had been through teacher changes during their time at the college, three because they were dissatisfied with their teacher. In each of these cases, this process had produced considerable anxiety, and had been delayed through confusion, self-doubt, and fear of the teacher’s reaction. The difficulty of coming to the point of asking to change teachers was perhaps perceived to be a betrayal of the relationship with the teacher, but the students then also felt disappointed in letting things run for longer than was really appropriate. One student had heard traumatic stories from a previous teacher about changing teachers. Coupled with confusion about what to do, and general unhappiness in his first year at college, the problems became seriously magnified:

S2: He’s a perfectly nice guy [teacher], it was fine, but I think from my first lesson I ... didn’t feel inspired to practise from the word go, and I thought “well, I will see

this through and persevere” and I really tried, but by the end of the first term, well I had this platform and I had a lesson the day before my first ever platform, .... he didn’t say anything about it, he was just sort of saying “oh how can you play every note exactly the same” and he was demonstrating....he’d never put his [instrument] down, he would always have to have his [instrument], and sort of play absolutely amazingly, and try and get me to do it and I couldn’t. I would just feel stupid. I would be in floods of tears and down the phone to my mum saying “I am going to leave the Guildhall”, ...it was as though I was having to make myself practise rather than I wanted to do it.

In the end he found it impossible to talk to his teacher about the difficulties, but went independently for a consultation lesson with another teacher, and then asked to change through the Head of Department.

Another student felt unable to talk to her teacher about her concerns, and was only finally motivated to take action after working with a different teacher in a class, and feeling totally inspired:

S9: But I got to the stage where I was very close to changing and then I decided I couldn’t actually tell [teacher A] that I wanted to go, because I didn’t know how she would react, ...But then.... I was [performing] in a.... class and [teacher B] was taking it, and I got up and [performed] and felt happy with the rapport which we had with each other automatically... I thought “well this can’t be bad” and it got to the end of the lesson and a few of my year group came up to me and said, - “he did wonders for you in that 10 minutes”.

The process, however, of discussing the change with her existing teacher proved to be awkward, and left a residue of difficult feelings, possibly on both sides:

S9: ... she rang me ... and I said to her ... “I need to talk to you and do you mind if the pianist comes 10 minutes later?” and she said “oh what’s it about?” I said “I can’t tell you over the phone, and I will tell you later” and she was like “oh ok”, and

when I did speak to her she was like, “I was going to ask you to change anyway”. I was thinking that’s an interesting defence mechanism working there.

Following this experience, the student felt that there needed to be a protocol which was clearly explained to all students, and which could be used at any time if a student experienced difficulties with a teacher and wanted to change. The protocol needed to include, she felt, more substantial support for the student in these circumstances.

## **The wider contexts of learning**

### ***Integration of one-to-one lessons in the curriculum***

The predominant feeling amongst the students was that there was little integration between the work they did in one-to-one tuition and the rest of the curriculum, especially in the academic classes. Fourteen of them considered one-to-one tuition to operate in a separate world, which was isolated and special, the place where the core of their learning took place. They saw classes as a peripheral activity, and at times irrelevant. Five students were able to discuss ways in which there was some integration, and one student did not discuss this aspect at all. In a few cases the feeling of integration was focused within the department, as for example with the vocalists, who had a wide range of language and song classes as part of their immediate departmental activity. In other cases, the integration extended to classes designed for all the students, such as music studies and teaching skills courses. Table 22 gives examples of different perspectives.

*Table 22 – Students’ perceptions of one-to-one lessons within the curriculum as a whole*

One-to-one integrated in the curriculum	One-to-one as an isolated activity
<p>S13: It works quite well, because obviously being in the 3rd year we get quite a lot of .... classes in different [technical aspects]..., which means that I get to work with these people .....they actually say “this is what I want you to [prepare]”. So I end up panicking about it and then run it through with [teacher] and it is fine, and so that links in quite nicely. A lot of people say that they don’t necessarily work with their teachers on the pieces that they have to do in classes, but I find it useful ...</p>	<p>S18: Well, my [instrumental] lessons, although in a perfect world and technically I should say that everything is equal, but my [instrumental] lessons are by far the most important thing and there is nothing that will change that. The rest of the things that I have to do here they’re fine and I do them and I try to get my stuff handed in on time.</p>
<p>S20: ... [integration] depends on your options which you pick in your electives. For me I picked harmony, second study composition, and aural, .... So harmony linked in very much with composition, ... one of my problems with the course has been that I think ... how important is each area? And if it’s not your principal study it is pushed to the back....I think you have to try and make time for things, even though you do have to prioritize.... because otherwise everything is just watered down, and you are mediocre, and then you don’t know what you are doing. I feel that everything is relevant, ... we have covered a lot of aspects of music, .. and if you are prepared to try and link them to your repertoire then you can, but it takes a long time to sink in, it won’t have sunk in this year.</p>	<p>S6: ...all the academic subjects - they are academic, and our lessons I feel ...are more the physical doing of something, so I don’t really see the connection there. Although, of course... the music history subjects, they enhance my critical views about music, and then when I play a piece I think about these things, but in terms of what he [the teacher] is teaching, I actually feel that they are two different things, because it’s the doing of something that he teaches, and in the academic subjects it is from the neck up.</p>

Nearly all the students felt that it was their own responsibility to integrate experiences in different areas of the curriculum, and this was not something to discuss with their teacher, even if it was proving to be problematic. Only one student suggested directly that more support with this would be useful. An extreme example of a student not asking for support from a teacher involved a case where the student usually had his lessons at his teacher's home. This, he suggested, increased the privacy, and the potential for them both to immerse themselves in the learning process. On the other hand, it meant that the teacher was rather detached, and not in contact with other aspects of his course, even with something as close to the individual lesson as chamber music. This was not empowering, and the situation he described was in fact probably one where some active support from the teacher could have helped to rectify an otherwise ongoing problem. However, this was not his point of view:

S6: .... I have actually had a lot of problems in this whole area [chamber music], it has been really difficult for me to hold a group together, and for most of this year I have been without a group, and without any way of being able to put it right. I haven't really talked to [my teacher] about it, because it's not her fault, ... she can't do anything about it, so there is not much point in saying.....

### ***Group learning and the peer group***

The nature of professional music-making for most people involved interacting and working with other people:

S16: ...Just the camaraderie, the interplay with a lot of different people, it's very different from university where obviously what you do is very much on an independent and individual basis. Here ... you are interacting all the time with other people .... So, that experience of working with other people and getting on

and putting up with other people, and being able to jump from one thing to another. It's a constant activity here, I imagine if you have a desk job or you are writing or whatever, it's much more regular and I guess seems much more straightforward.

In this sense, the one-to-one teacher-student relationship was not at all representative of professional experience, with its unpredictable, ever-shifting challenges and relationships. However, the students did not seem to be particularly proactive in seeking out opportunities for group work, and learning from and supporting one another. The peer group was generally perceived more as a fact of life than as a learning resource, and there was little reflection on how to make the best use of it.

In spite of this attitude, it seemed that students were learning from one another, even if they were not particularly aware of it. Nevertheless, a few students expressed a desire for more one-to-one tuition rather than less:

S11: I can't think of a specific point that I feel that I'm missing just in terms of time, I would like to have more, just more time, more lessons. If the whole week was filled with twice or maybe 4 times as many ... lessons that would be a good thing.... it would give me a chance to repeat things...

It was clear that the one-to-one environment provided input from which students could learn with relatively little of their own effort. Not only did nearly all the students tend to value the opinions of the teachers more than those of their peers, in most cases they also felt that they could learn more in one-to-one tuition than in a group. As one student reported, it was much easier to get bored and to disengage in a class:



S16: ...[1-1 tuition] is the best way to learn, it is the way to get information from someone without sitting in a class, getting bored, listening to other people all the time or whatever, and you are able to focus all the time.....

HG: Are there things that you can get from being two or three in a group being taught that you don't get from one to one?

S16: The responses from the other students I suppose, but if I was to have to weigh it up, I would prefer to have one-to-one and miss out on the responses because I think it would be more useful to hear the teacher...

In one-to-one tuition it seemed that the students actually had to work less hard themselves in terms of sustaining motivation and the pace of learning. There was little need to shift in modes of thinking from performing to watching others, acting, reflecting, even thinking laterally about others' experiences. Essentially this was an easy environment in which to learn, requiring less effort in terms of active engagement in assimilating and integrating knowledge and skills. This may have been an important factor in their appreciation of it.

A few students indicated that working in a chamber group really helped them to learn. One student, for example, said that it made her question her own ideas and thinking and realise that some of the ideas which came from her teacher were not necessarily always right:

S6: Last year, I increasingly worked with my [chamber group], so there were four people trying to think of one thing, and it has been tough at times because we have got different ideas, it's about who is right and what makes most sense, and because inevitably we are all influenced by our own teachers, we tend to think then that our way of thinking is the right thing.... I have learnt from them that ..., to take dynamics in the literal sense can be dangerous because it will never project in a hall, and there is one girl in my quartet who thinks you really have to do the real dynamics, and I find its more a matter of tone colours, so there are always

discrepancies between us....I actually have learned to accept, or she has managed to accept as well that one can't be too dogmatic about things, .....

Other benefits of learning in an instrumental group were also identified by a few students. For example:

S7: I think learning in groups is good, ... it's a much more open way of learning in a way, and you are not so obsessed with how you are doing it, and your way, and it kind of opens your eyes a bit more. And sometimes, for example if you see someone else doing that easily, you just go "oh, OK" and then it's not a problem, but as long as you don't criticize yourself too much.

### *Practising*

The students' perceptions of practising further illuminated their approaches to learning. The need for practice, and for practice of good quality was a universal basic assumption, yet few were proactively engaged in trying to improve their own ways of practising, for example, through experimenting with different processes, discussing it with peers, recording and reflecting on their own habits.

One of the few students who was used to making plans in relation to practising on a weekly basis, used this as an opportunity to reflect on what his teacher had said in a lesson, and to work out how to build the recommendations into the practice sessions:

S2: I have quite a good memory, so I can remember things, and so I don't really need to take notes, but often on the train home I will get the music out and look at it, and try and [think].....how I am going to practise, and I will often plan when, and how I am going to do my practice...

Interestingly, the structure of the practice here seemed to reflect the structure of the lessons. This was common to most of the students, and the singers often followed

the warm-up and technical exercises in exactly the same format as the previous lesson, by singing along to a recording of the lesson:

S19: ... basically it turns out that I do have a structure where I warm up, do the exercises for 10 or 15 minutes and then get round to pieces.

In general the attitudes of most of the students to the structures and different possible processes involved in practising were rather passive, and there was little evidence of approaching this as a creative process. The students were not particularly preoccupied or excited by the topic, although it was clear that they practised in different ways:

S13: Some of the students do a lot of brain gym, ..... they are all very much in tune with that kind of side of things, so they do half hour of that before they start any exercises or songs and stuff, which is not what I do but .. I think that most people do basic warm up and then carry on with the [music] that they are learning.

HG: So it is not a topic of discussion?

S: Not really.

Exceptions to this were a few mature students, who articulated a clear understanding of some components of effective practising, and were also proactive in asking teachers for help and advice about it:

HG: When you practise do you get, or have you ever had your teachers involved with how you go about practising, how long/which exercises?

S16: Yes, I think that is a useful thing to know again. You might end up doing something for too long or not enough. So, being given guidelines is useful

HG: What makes it good?

S16: Being in a positive frame of mind, being enthusiastic about what you are going to practice, being awake not tired, having a goal to achieve, so I think practice will

be a bit better if I have a deadline, if I know I have to sing this next Tuesday so I'd better make sure I can do it now!

One student talked about the ways in which his teacher might intervene to help him improve his practice. Here he became conscious of how much the quality of his practice could change:

S2: ... this is why she is a good teacher, because I think it's not so much telling you how to play but telling you how to practise. And yes, she is very kind of "don't practise it just bashing through" and she will practise in front of me, ... because I do need that, because I can just kind of go off into a world of my own, and not be very organized .... she is very focused and has a very problem-solving mind. I am more sort of all over the place, .....she will say "just practise this bit in front of her" and I will do it as best as I can, and she will say "oh no, you are still sort of sliding around, and you could just have silence before you play", ...

A few students were also aware of how their practice habits had changed over time.

For example:

HG: Do you think that you practise effectively?

S19: Yes, now. I didn't, but I do now.....Basically, if something went wrong when I was practising, I would just leave it and move on to something else that was working better, whereas now ...I know that I can do it, and it takes a bit of time and bit more of effort on my part to get it right

This all showed how significant an impact practising could have on learning, and that this could be a rich area for development with some students. Not all teachers, however, had much input into how their students should practise. Apart from the three students who reported that their teachers asked them to demonstrate in a lesson how they would practise, there was no other monitoring of the processes:

S4: I think he trusts that his students have the ability to practise themselves, and do the most that they can.

### *Processes of transition in a music college*

The process of transition in coming to a conservatoire emerged as an important theme. Eleven students referred directly to difficulties they had encountered. These often related to the changes in expectations, which they perceived both in terms of the amount of work, and the level of detail which teachers required, and their own place within the general standards of playing/singing. Students tended to feel that they moved from an environment in which they had been praised and recognised for their musical achievements to a more competitive environment in which there were plenty of players who were at least as good, or better than them. This was a sudden change, and it was difficult for them to communicate with their teacher(s) about it, particularly as it was not always clear how much the problems were to do with the student's own changing engagement with music, and how much they might relate to the teacher and the one-to-one tuition. The results of this for six of them were that they experienced a stage of feeling miserable, their lessons were not productive, and they wanted to give up. Problems were also further complicated by cultural issues especially for the overseas students, and by the fact that for many this was the first time living away from home. In this context, it was not surprising that they felt a strong need for one-to-one tuition, which could replace the sense of security offered by a parent, and they were not inclined to be too critical of a teacher. However, the considerable challenges presented in the transition period (which could last up to two years) could knock confidence and amplify any feelings of insecurity which

students had around their own ability as musician. Examples of these difficulties are shown in table 23.

*Table 23 – Difficulties experienced by students in the transition to the Guildhall School*

<p>S4: Yes, I remember my first lesson [with teacher at the Guildhall School] very well. Because I sort of came in and I played [a] concerto, and after I got silence for about two minutes, well it seemed like two minutes! Anyway, it wasn't that long - his lips were "hmmm alright", I remember leaving the lesson thinking that he thought I was the worst player ever, and he didn't know what he was going to do with me or something.... I was half thinking of leaving, but then I sort of, well I thought, I'll just work and see how it went. It wasn't actually like that, but I don't know what he was thinking.....</p>
<p>S13: When I first got here because I was direct entry to second year, it was quite tough because you obviously had to fit into a year group that was already established, and it was very much the case of "oh you have been to university and done a degree therefore you must know xyz" but actually no! I actually failed my mid-year in my first year, and whether that was down to not really knowing what I was doing as such at the time, I was not really sure.</p>
<p>S6: Well, I would say, I have been through a rough patch with [my teacher] as well, where it didn't seem too clear what he was on about, and I think that everyone has that at some point.... frustrating from both sides, I was feeling I was a very useless student, and I am not talented, and the whole world was going down. And I think, that's when the teacher..., it's frustrating because he can't get across with me, so he feels he might be bad at explaining things, or he might be a bad teacher ...I've never really done anything actively to tackle it, because I didn't know how to, and I just went back and tried to understand what he was saying, and then in the course of time it just did make sense. But at that time, when we were just bogged down in details again, you just don't see them, the whole picture....He has been through there with many other students as well, he just assures you that you will be ok and everyone has been through that, that kind of thing. And most of the time I found when I went through rough patches with him was when I wasn't so happy with my own playing, for example after I failed an audition, and naturally you go through a rough time, and that is when you start questioning... is his teaching the right thing for you....</p>

It was also in the first two years in the school that students tended to report the most difficulties with a teacher. The challenges of the transitional process were significant enough, but when combined with problems within one-to-one tuition, this could be overwhelming. It seemed that this in part contributed to the particular struggles those students had in tackling a change of teacher during their first or second year in the college:

S9: It got to a stage where I couldn't quite cope with being changed as well as trying to cope with the change from university to here.

## **Summary**

The students interviewed had diverse needs and backgrounds in terms of musical education. They were all delighted with the current relationship(s) they had with a teacher(s), although they characterised these in different ways. They all considered one-to-one tuition to be an important part of their work, and a productive learning environment. They particularly appreciated the undivided attention this could offer, the level of musical and technical detail which could be explored, and the chance to learn at their own pace. Nevertheless, some students also expressed a thirst for a variety of input and ideas. Those students who had more than one teacher relished the different perspectives and experiences which their teachers brought to the lessons. The process of engaging with a number of teachers also seemed to stimulate these students towards greater autonomy in learning, encouraging them to weigh up perspectives, and organise their personal time and the content of lessons more effectively. In general, however, the students displayed a rather passive attitude to

planning and evaluating their work. Beyond the concrete issue of which repertoire to prepare for which performances, planning and evaluation were not often important parts of lessons or of practice time.

The issue of power in the relationship with a teacher was not discussed explicitly, although the dynamics of power suffusing it were evident. For example, students who encountered difficulties in the relationship were afraid of a teacher's reaction and possible repercussions. One student also perceived some of the gains for a teacher in being the exclusive teacher of particular students, especially if the students became successful:

S10: I think that there is an element of back stabbing, I think. There is an element that teachers make their name on certain students and visa versa, and teachers tend to want keep their students.

It seemed, however, that students were often willingly drawn into accepting the strong influences of a teacher, were prepared to do whatever they said, and easily justified this to themselves. Teachers had extraordinary power to influence students in terms of career aspirations, musical ideas and instrumental/vocal development. To enter into this kind of relationship was perhaps also an attractive option for students, in that it provided a means of learning that did not necessarily require them to engage proactively in the learning processes, an alternative to having to assimilate different kinds of input from different quarters, which might raise conflicts and demand more difficult processes of critical evaluation, planning and choice.



One of the most surprising aspects of these findings was that there appeared to be great differences in the students' experiences of one-to-one tuition, yet without exception, the students demonstrated great appreciation of their current teacher. Reflecting on this in relation to my own teaching and action research, I was reminded again of the strength of the impact of the one-to-one relationship itself on learning, and the way in which this perhaps obscured for students the kinds of learning which were being facilitated in one-to-one tuition and the implications of these for their future careers.

I realised that, for example, adopting a teaching approach which essentially encouraged students to wait for, and expect, solutions or prescriptions from a teacher could provide an efficient and relatively unchallenging way of stimulating instrumental/vocal progress, even if this did not provide students with lifelong learning skills or even the tools to meet a related by slightly different learning situation (for example becoming teachers themselves). In this respect, my own action research had identified the power which my students tended to invest in me as their teacher, and had illuminated in some a dependent and passive approach to learning, waiting to be told what to do, or to be given the answers to their problems. When given such instructions and solutions, they were delighted, and there seemed to be no consideration of a future time when they would need to be more proactive in problem-solving and directing their own development.

On the other hand, I was also aware in the action research of the both the difficulties and the rewards for the students (and for me) of developing a more independent approach, taking more responsibility for our own learning. This emerged through the research process itself, and the aspects of reflection and group interaction which it demanded. The sense of empowerment which came through this process was evident, through the building of self-confidence in practising and playing the oboe, and the reduction of anxiety underlying our approach to work.

The data from the interviews with students showed that those students who had teachers who required them to be more autonomous as learners found this initially challenging, but in the end rewarding, and they appreciated the ways in which their teachers enabled them to take more control over their learning process. It also seemed from the data that these students were developing more innate, lasting self-confidence in themselves as learners and musicians, and also tended to have a broader range of musical interests and ideas about their professional futures. However, these students were no more appreciative of their teachers than others, and this suggested that perhaps the perception of all the students was that they were doing a lot of learning, but that they did not necessarily consider what kinds of learning they were experiencing, nor what the longer-term implications of their learning might be. It seemed possible that the strength of the one-to-one relationship meant that the students were not inclined to question the nature of the learning, nor to consider how this would fit into the longer-term picture of their professional development. In fact it seemed that in the interviews, and similarly in my action

research, the students only questioned their learning when they felt there was a real block to it, a crisis where they perceived their learning was being stopped by the teacher. So, for example, with one of my students (see p.30), the one-to-one interactions seemed to become too close and intensely demanding of change and progress. With the students interviewed, one felt unable to develop under the eye of a teacher which he felt was just too critical and unsupportive. Another felt that a teacher was requiring her to change too much as a person as well as a musician. Not being willing to change in this way, she also felt that she could not make any progress in terms of her particular musical discipline.

In this context, where students were universally appreciative of the teaching they received (unless there was a real crisis in their learning), but where the approaches to teaching which they identified also suggested that the learning experiences would have quite different emphases and outcomes, it was important to consider further the match between the perceptions of a teacher and their students, and the impact this had on learning. Consequently some individual case studies of teacher and student pairs were selected. An analysis of these forms the focus for the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6 - THE MATCH BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

In this chapter, five teacher-student pairs are considered in relation to the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5. These are used to illustrate some of the key issues which emerged, particularly in relation to the tensions between transmission of skills through apprenticeship and developing autonomy in learning, and between the degree of support offered by one-to-one tuition and the tendency for the relationship itself to impact on objective judgement, through generating idealised perceptions of current teachers. The match between the perceptions of the teacher and student is investigated in each case, and the implications are discussed.

The particular teacher-student pairs were chosen for analysis because they represented contrasting perceptions, particularly in terms of the key issues of apprenticeship, autonomy in learning, and the characterisation of the one-to-one relationship. In two cases the teacher was involved in two pairs, and this enabled some comparison to take place between the ways in which teachers were perceived by different students.

With each teacher and student(s), an introductory overview is given, followed by a portrait of the students and the teacher, focussing on their perceptions of the aims and processes involved in one-to-one tuition, the impact of the relationship itself, and issues relating to the wider learning context beyond one-to-one tuition. A final discussion

explores the similarities and differences between these student-teacher groups. The names of the teachers and students have been changed to preserve anonymity, and all references to specific instruments or music departments have been removed, as these could make individual teachers or students identifiable.

### **Vocational apprenticeship: David (1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate), Brian (1<sup>st</sup> year postgraduate), and Amanda (teacher)**

#### ***Introduction***

In this instance, one teacher (Amanda) is considered along with two of her students (David, a first year undergraduate, and Brian, a first year postgraduate}, forming two teacher-student pairs. In both cases, the aims of the teacher and students were closely aligned. They conceptualised the teaching and learning in terms of apprenticeship, and intense personal bonds formed between them. The emphasis in Amanda's approach was preparation for a solo and/or chamber music career. The standard of playing of her students was generally high, and she reported that nearly all her students went on to performing careers:

Amanda: generally they work. I try to only take the ones that are going to work because .... I think it's a cruel, cruel business, if you're not good enough and you're struggling... it's vicious.....

She had developed a highly analytic approach to instrumental technique from her own experience. Both David and Brian liked the rigour and the degree of detail she offered. This extended into aspects of musical interpretation, and indeed into issues related to individual practice:

Amanda: I literally monitor what they do throughout the week. ... I'll say "what have

you got in your diary, you know what's going on, who are you seeing?'...I might get very nosy essentially. The various rules I have... you should have all your technical work done before lunch ideally because then it's done, ... I don't actually advocate eight hours practice a day, never have done. I'm more a kind of four to five.....I find that they actually function much better doing that amount of practice..... I then structure, no matter how old or young and beautiful, I actually structure their four hours. So I give them scales for forty five minutes, fifteen minutes [technical] exercises, two hours repertoire, studies an hour and a half....

Amanda was unashamedly directive, but felt that she gave room for the students to adapt things within a given structure. Both David and Brian were quite happy to go along with this, and worked hard.

The relationship which formed between Amanda and each student was intense, both musically and personally. Amanda felt a great deal of responsibility for her students, and characterised her role first and foremost as parental. David and Brian both thought of her as an authoritative figure, but were utterly devoted to her, and felt she was by far the best teacher they had ever had:

David: .... studying with her actually was probably the biggest piece of luck that happened, although I wasn't aware of it for several years...

### ***David - aims and processes***

David, a first year undergraduate student, felt that he had a good chance of "making it" as a soloist. He was driven by an ambition to succeed and reach the top, and had a definite sense of where he stood in relation to other up and coming instrumentalists:

David:.... there are some who are younger than me who play [with greater technical security]... and are somewhat more solid. You know, fine, I don't feel threatened by them any more. Anyway, it's never been all that many, so it's alright.

Alongside this ambition to achieve, he demonstrated a deep engagement with music and the process of his own development as an instrumentalist. In the interview he discussed individual pieces in detail, his interpretative ideas and related instrumental issues, emphasising the ever-increasing refinement of his own processes of listening. His interpretative ideas, however, were not always aligned with Amanda's, and David described how, in lessons, they would work through the ideas through discussion, playing, demonstrating and then both coming up with fresh ideas. This seemed to present a clear example of Schon's collaborative reflection-in-action at work, similar to the kinds of interaction observed between Quist and Petra in the architect's studio (Schon 1983: 44-79). For example, David contrasted his idea of a particular piece with Amanda's, and described the process of collaborating to find a new interpretation:

David: It's [my interpretation] slightly more romantic, because actually ... I also have my own fantasy world about the piece, and how it is from my own experiences and things, and I imagine a very much more kind of stately, kind of ornate Esterhazy palace....., and so ... I have this, and she has her idea, ... sort of much faster..., with more forward energy, ... I don't know how put into words. So, first lesson come in: "it's very, very slow, I can see what you are trying to do, but maybe it's not this", and so I told her what I want to do, then we start working it, and finally we come up with a tempo that is slightly faster although not as fast as hers..... The newest thing ... is a ... sort of awareness of listening to what is actually being produced. It sounds also very remedial, but it's not in this way, it's a real ... awareness of all of the intervals, ... like listening under a magnifying glass in a way.

The process seemed to be productive, with David actively using Amanda to help develop his own ideas. At the same time, he was also beginning to become aware of his metacognitive processes and how these might contribute to his learning. For example, he was curious about how Amanda managed to find ways to help him, not only to understand things, but also to feel them for himself. In this sense he wanted to

understand the learning processes themselves, and was clear that she was not “spoon-feeding” him, but was enabling him to discover his own unique version of them through a scaffolding process:

David: And I said to her, “I understand what you are saying and that’s absolutely fine, but I am just curious in how you manage to articulate everything, and actually manage to get the results out of me”, and she said “it just comes from an ability to see whatever it is that somebody is doing and then just take it apart to the absolute basic thing”....

### ***David - the one-to-one relationship***

David reported that the relationship with Amanda was incredibly beneficial to his progress. Some important factors emerged to illuminate this. For example, it was clear that, as David suggested, Amanda was a strong and stubborn personality, but so too was he. She acknowledged her own tendency to be tough on students: “I think one thing I have inherited [from own teachers] is a toughness. I’m very intolerant of flakiness, which is absolutely, directly from them”.

David was also adamant about his own strong views. Consequently they were a good match for one another, and both could appreciate the other’s musical ideas without feeling undermined:

David: It’s very civilised of course, [my musical interpretation is] not threatening to her, and hers isn’t particularly threatening to me either.

HG: You don’t feel in anyway “I ought to be doing it like that?”

David: No, not any more.

However, David’s last comment here, “No, not any more” signalled that this was a relationship which had evolved considerably over time. He was now in his seventh year



of studying with Amanda, and whilst it was working brilliantly, this had certainly not been the case initially, she had been quite an imposing, at times frightening character. His response had been immense resistance and anger. When the lessons had first started, instead of telling him how wonderful he was, she was highly critical and took him back to basic principles and exercises:

David: OK, ten years of playing all big pieces, really big fish in a small pond. Everyone saying “you’re great, you’re great”, and then the first lesson: “right, now play a scale! Ok so, you can’t do that, now you are going to stop playing big pieces, and we are going to put you on really, not even remedial things, but just more normal things for thirteen year olds”. That was a big ego thing!

He had little inclination to take on the amount of work that was required to make significant changes, and this continued for a period of several years:

HG: You wanted to kick against that?

David: Yes of course, and I was incredibly jealous ... of some other people who played lots of big pieces and things...Didn’t work for a year and a half.... Just didn’t do anything ...

HG: So, how did Amanda handle that? Presumably she cottoned on to the fact that you weren’t working?

David: You know, I had a lot of really bad lessons.

HG: Did you? What happens in a bad lesson, what does she do?

David: I don’t really have them any more

HG: But I bet you can remember them though!

David: Oh I absolutely can remember them, it depends on what kind of mood she was in, ... A really bad lesson I would just get really, really bollocked, and ... it would sort of be scary, and then I would forget about it for a week. I am unbelievably stubborn.... It wasn’t like “you’re crap, you’re crap”, no not like this, ... but ... she has a very, very good way, if she senses that one of her kids is not doing what they should be doing, she is very, very good at making them feel very bad about doing nothing.

David described a turning point in this relationship, however, when his own increasing maturity and a particular conversation with Amanda made him realise the reality of some clear choices:

David: ... this was when I really buckled down and started working properly, and this was also when the relationship with ... became very, very much more interesting than it was before. It stopped to be just a question of her telling me what to do, and to be much more just sharing information. ... I'd just had the worst term I'd ever had.... then there was a summer when I just crashed. Didn't do anything, incredibly lazy, whatever, and then that term she just said to me "you know, you are too old to be doing this any more, you are two years off eighteen, you say you want to do this, ...but actually there's no point in saying that if you are not working at this point, ... if you want to be a soloist and do this kind of thing, which of course you have the raw capability to do, but you know a lot of people do". After that term ... I realised a lot of things, and it hit me like a ton of bricks, it was always going to. The amount of money my parents had to pay.....

From this point onwards his dedication to becoming a soloist did not waver. The strong similarities in their interests and aims allowed him to be drawn into the world which she offered, to engage with the intense technical and musical work demanded, and to practise hard. This was what now continued to underpin their interactions and his self-discipline.

Hand in hand with the sense of a match between these two extremely strong, committed characters, and collaborative engagement in this work, David also reported an intense level of personal support which he found in the relationship:

David: I am one of the very lucky people who have found a teacher that I work as well with, and a lot of people actually never find that. And she has been more than just a professor of the [instrument] for me, she has been there for me when any number of crises has happened, sort of people dying, you know whatever going on with me at

[school] - with relationships, ... anything, she's always been there, dedicated, just ...ready to talk and help me.

He described it as a mentor-pupil relationship, but this was certainly one which extended beyond music, and provided for a wide range of his needs. The boundaries he identified then revolved more around her personal life rather than his:

David: Her personal life is not my thing, I wouldn't bring it up, no. But as far as "don't call me on a Sunday", she has always been there for me.....It's not as simple as just being in her [instrument] class, and sometimes teachers are like that. My best friend studies with [teacher A], and he only shows up for lessons, and that's sort of it, but ... that's why I've been studying with her for as long as I have.....

The relationship was clearly important to his personal world as well as his world of music-making, and this accounted at least in part for why he had stayed with her for so many years, and had no thought of changing teacher.

With Amanda holding such a uniquely powerful position in David's learning environment, it was perhaps significant that in terms of his old teachers, and a number of other teachers of his instrument in other institutions, David was forthrightly negative: "I actually studied with some really bad teachers". Comparing a teacher of similar standing to his own, he said: "it's not that it's very different – it's just bad. All of his pupils sound like him.....it sounds terrible anyway". David was utterly confident about Amanda, and he saw a divide between her and other teachers. This exemplified the tendency, described in the previous chapter, for students to be unequivocally positive about their current one-to-one teacher(s), and more critical of previous ones. It suggested that the one-to-one relationship carried with it a need to idealise or strongly criticise a teacher, rather than seeing them more realistically with both strengths and

weaknesses, and that the personal investment in a current teacher tended towards this relationship being idealised for as long as possible.

### ***David – the context of one-to-one tuition***

It was perhaps not surprising, given the nature of his relationship with Amanda, that David was not much interested in other classes and activities at the college. He was actively engaged in one chamber group, but apart from this did not particularly value what he might learn from his peers. His learning largely revolved around the one-to-one lessons:

David: ... in a perfect world and technically I should say that everything is equal, but my [one-to-one] lessons are by far the most important thing, and there is nothing that will change that. The rest of the things that I have to do here, they're fine and I do them, and I try to get my stuff handed in on time....there are some things that I question the value about, but actually I don't really care, because I'm doing what I really want to do.

Nevertheless, David was highly self-motivated and engaged himself in reading both on subjects related to music and more generally. He pursued his own avenues of interest and developed his own ideas. Whilst the context of the rest of the curriculum was relatively unimportant to him, he developed independently, and seemed to have a strong sense of responsibility about this.

### ***Brian - aims and processes***

In contrast to David, Brian, a first year postgraduate, was rather more vague about his future. He was also keen on a solo and chamber music career, but was aware that professional life was looming fast, and he would need to find work:

HG: what are your plans after studying here?

Brian: I am not 100% sure yet. I am interested in teaching of course.

HG: Why do you say of course?

Brian: I just think that the way things are going, you can't really not teach basically, and to be realistic as well, a lot of players have teaching positions that they hold down as a sort of basis of what they do, on top of that they do chamber music and whatever solo work comes along, if it does.

Although prepared to look beyond the solo and chamber music career, Brian was taking a relatively passive attitude to finding work of this kind. He was beginning to think about the possibilities, and was taking a short elective course in teaching skills, but was not doing anything proactively to build a profile as a teacher, nor considering the range of skills and resources he might need to balance a portfolio career successfully. His work was focused around his instrument and the development of his ability as a performer. Brian identified clear aims in this work. When he had first arrived to study with Amanda (nine months previously), he had been incredibly tense as a player, and so unlocking this was key:

Brian: ....my technique had completely locked up, and was going nowhere fast, and I knew this because I had been doing courses abroad ...., and I saw what other people could do, and teachers were telling me things, so basically the aim for this year was ... to free up my playing and actually start improving again.

He felt that the level of teaching he was now receiving was much higher than he had previously experienced, and he attributed this to Amanda's technical analytic approach to the foundation of playing:

HG: But there is a core, a technical approach in there that appeals to you?

Brian: Very much so, the technical side of it is very much about sorting out your playing completely, so basically your technique is built to your physique as well...So that you play completely freely ..., without any tension issues or huge technical problems.

In comparison with this technical foundation, other aspects of preparing for professional life faded into the background.

Brian was aware that he needed to become more independent and be able to be his own teacher:

Brian: No, I am not quite self sufficient yet. I mean ideally by the time you have finished studying, ... you can actually teach yourself, ... you are so aware of ... what you are doing, and what is going on and what's really sliding backwards, that you can catch up and keep on teaching yourself, ...

His understanding, however, of what this might entail was of a basic kind, and he referred to being aware now that if he stopped working at the technique of the instrument, his playing would suffer:

Brian: Well I can see now that if I stop doing a lot of technical work, my playing starts to shut down, and my bowing doesn't work properly and my sound sort of gets really quiet, which ain't beautiful, and it's very clear to me that I'm not doing scales in the morning, so my fingers aren't in shape, and my bow work isn't so good. If you let these things slide for too long, you just go down the drain slightly.

Beyond this he seemed to have little understanding of the skills he might need to keep himself motivated, musically and creatively engaged in his playing, and continuing to explore new avenues.

### ***Brian - the one-to-one relationship***

As with David, Brian showed great respect for Amanda's ability as a player and as a teacher. He projected an immense sense of joint enthusiasm with her for the instrument and its music, and they enjoyed exploring this beyond the framework of the lessons:

Brian: ...with Amanda and my last teacher I've had a sort of social relationship - we have gone to the pub, we have had pints, we have talked about things. It usually descends into [instrument] conversation yet again...I think that sort of thing develops the relationship further.....

Brian seemed to be able to develop good relationships with all his instrumental teachers, although he characterised them in quite different ways. A sign of the lasting social strength of these relationships was that he still met up with his previous teachers:

Brian: ...I think testament to them is that I am still in contact with them all. So, every time I am back home ..., I sort of meet up with my teacher from undergrad for a beer or something, my other teacher I always go and see her and play, and we have a chat, and she gives me gigs.

He also suggested that his commitment to hard work was an important part of creating this healthy relationship, and stimulating a teacher's interest in him:

Brian: ....my teachers have been interested in me because I have worked, and it's never really been a case of ... they're only ever interested in the naturally talented people, but if people are putting in the work they will also be interested in them...

HG: So there needs to be quite a lot of commitment?

Brian: Yeah, on both sides, I think that for there to be a commitment on the teacher's side, the student has to be putting in the work.

Furthermore, he was able to separate out the personal and professional aspects of his relationships with his previous teachers, and he could be critical of them in terms of their professional work:

Brian: ... basically my teacher was having quite large personal problems and ... I ... wasn't left high and dry, but my lessons ... involved him being slightly despondent, ...I was left slightly, kind of to myself.

***Brian – the context of one-to-one tuition***

There was little sense of Brian being prepared for the range of different activities which he already could see would characterise his professional life. In addition, there was also little interaction with the peer group. For example, Amanda held a performance class on a fairly regular basis, but this was a class where students simply sat and listened, and discussion was not an integral part. Occasionally students would talk to one another after the class and ask for feedback. Brian was evidently nervous of this, and suggested that he would only ask for feedback if he felt himself that he had played reasonably well, and the feedback would be good:

Brian: If you want to get feedback from your peers, you ask for it.

HG: After?

Brian: Yes.

HG: Do you do that?

Brian: Sometimes, it depends how well I play.

HG: Do you do it if you play well, or if you have played badly?

Brian: If I have played badly, I played badly, I don't need anybody else's input.

HG: So, if you play well, what kind of feedback are you hoping for: "well done" or?

Brian: No, that's slightly sort of optimistic, but just how people thought, what came across well, what went wrong.

Brian was fearful of the reactions of his peers, and did not seem to be able to trust them other than in what he perceived were favourable circumstances. The chief purpose of these classes then was not to develop interaction between the students and processes of constructive, critical feedback, but rather for the students to have an opportunity to perform under pressure and to feel their own reactions. As Brian pointed out, his tendency was to collapse in this situation, and so it was unlikely that he would feel



sufficiently pleased with himself to ask for feedback. His aims once again focused on technique and musicianship, trying to develop these to a point where he could be more consistent and sustain the quality of his playing under pressure. The issues of what might be learned from the group were secondary:

Brian: I think just refining it [technique] down, and so it ... still works under pressure. This is a big thing. Amanda holds [instrumental] classes for all her students, and you have just to get up and play in front of all the class mates, and it is very horrendously tense for the people who are actually playing, and I just go to pieces basically.

HG: ... So have you talked about that with Amanda?

Brian: Yeah.

HG: And what are the strategies that she's.....?

Brian: Basically the more you do, the more you will get used to it.....if you can actually pull out the stops and play well, you can more or less play in front of anyone..... Especially when you are with fifteen people who know exactly what you are doing, and what you are doing wrong....

The context of performance here was clearly narrow and focused. This perhaps bore little relation to some of the work and contexts that Brian would find himself in within a year or so as he started to work as a professional, and where it might well be critical for him to interact more freely and constructively with his peers.

### *Amanda - aims and processes*

Amanda was a tough, and at times authoritarian teacher. A soloist performer herself, she knew how this part of the profession worked inside out, and was conscious of its intense demands. She articulated a hierarchy of perceived success for players of her instrument, and a perception therefore of certain pathways in the profession being less of a sign of success than others. She herself presented a role model of the highest level of

achievement, and her approach seemed to be one of survival of the fittest, tolerating only those who had a reasonable chance of following in something like her footsteps.

Her aims were clear:

Amanda: from an [instrumentalist's] point of view I want them to be able to function perfectly with no physical damage. From a personality point of view I want them to have the right level of ego and the right level of humility, which is sometimes a bit of a tough one! So they have enough ego to get themselves on stage and to do the job, but they also can tell when they need to do a bit more work and actually keep their heads down and not push themselves forward. I want them to enjoy what they're doing, I want them to be extremely gritty, and I want them to also have a very healthy business sense of how to operate with people, and how to network, but not irritatingly so.

The extremely high levels of instrumental facility seemed, however, to be a prerequisite to other developments. As she prepared her students, there was a clear progression in her teaching from concrete analytic technical things, to more abstract conceptual, imaginative ideas:

Amanda: The more work they do in a sense, I mean the more well set up they are, the more abstract my work becomes, in terms of speech and concepts... It's much more just finding ideas and metaphors, and nothing really very earthy... more up in the air and it's all about listening to sound, how you perceive the sound and where you hear it from. I love talking about that kind of stuff. But again, if I've got somebody who can't [manage technically], that's what I have to do, that's my job....they're not going to get into anything if they can't.

This progression was confirmed by the different levels of work which David and Brian were doing, and the way in which David's lessons had evolved.

Furthermore, a key issue she insisted upon was consistency as an instrumentalist, and her students being able to play under pressure in any circumstances. This view clearly came from her own experiences of being a young player and not being consistent

enough:

Amanda .....I always used to be this kind of person that relied on the wind blowing in the right direction, the sun shining and the plane not being late! And that was fine, I always got away with it to a certain extent, because whatever I have, I have, and I could get away with it, but there comes a point as we all know in this profession that you can't....

This was then directly echoed by both David and Brian. For example:

David: ... when you have ...100 Fahrenheit fever, and you know your mother has just died or something like this, because I mean that's the only way you can ever hope to sort of survive professional solo music career ... is by having that conviction, and actually just being able to churn it out day in, day out.....which is another thing I am working on, trying to do, being able to play not just sort of when the sun is shining at the right angle to the window....

This demonstrated an important feature of Amanda's teaching, which was that her approaches and attitude were closely mirrored in David and Brian's attitudes. Other examples included similar perceptions of the hierarchy of professional success, and similar ideas about the use of video and audio recording (rarely using it and never on a regular basis in practice). Whilst this was perhaps not surprising when such intense, significant relationships formed between teacher and student, an important conflict emerged here in relation to Amanda's own story. She stressed the degree to which she was independent as a learner, that this was what in the end had enabled her to establish a successful career, and had been the way in which she learned to teach.

### ***Amanda - the one-to-one relationship***

The tensions between independence in learning and Amanda's authoritarian approach were magnified further by her understanding of the one-to-one relationship. She seemed

to think like a parent, feeling great commitment to each student, but expressing the dilemma of thinking that whilst she knew what was best for a student, on the other hand she did not want to push so hard that the student gave up. For example, with a different student, she depicted a scenario reminiscent of a parent with an angry teenager:

Amanda: I think at the moment it'd be very easy for me to go in all guns blazing and say again, "even after the conversation last week, you are totally out of order," ... and what I feel is that he's slightly unhinged at the moment. And what I don't want to do is for him to just say, "right, I've had enough, going to go and be a merchant banker," and it feels close to that at the moment, however, I know he knows what's going on in my mind because I've talked to him about this in the past, and he's pulled these kinds of stunts before, not recently I have to say....but I have huge problems with him in getting consistency. Two weeks ago we had an absolutely fantastic lesson...done some work, went really well, great, and I just counted the minutes until the next lesson and knew exactly what was going to happen... a complete disaster.... He can't maintain two lessons in a row of a good standard.... Up, and then it's like a holiday for three weeks. ... I can't stand stewing on it, and I think the more one doesn't say anything the bigger the problem gets quite often. .... And I also think he needs to be adult enough to actually approach me, and that I shouldn't be the one running after him to make it all better.

In contrast, with David she seemed to have more of the obedient young adult, although there had been a difficult teenager phase, but this had been grown out of when he realised his own commitment to playing.

At the same time, whilst Amanda seemed to conceptualise her role as parental, she also characterised the relationship most strongly in terms of trust and respect on both sides, suggesting that she developed an open relationship with her students, whereby difficulties were aired immediately:

Amanda: utter respect, trust, total and utter trust,

HG: on both sides?

Amanda: on both sides....although it can function... and I have to say that I have some students, it's not that I don't trust them, but I don't particularly like them! (Laughs) I do trust them... they're all very honest. I don't really care what I hear from them including the issues they have with me - I mean I'm a great one for saying "okay I'm not going to blow up, tell me what's on your mind, including actually that you'd like to stick pins through my eyes right now and chop my head off!"... fine. If it's out in the open it's much more easy to deal with and they do.... maybe if I've misjudged something. I mean obviously it happens.

Her perceptions were therefore complex, indicating mutuality on the one hand, and the power of a parent's authority on the other. It was perhaps significant that this was the only time she indicated that she might make mistakes, things might go wrong, such was her confidence and strength as a teacher.

### *Summary*

A model of apprenticeship directed towards specific careers was in evidence with Amanda, David and Brian. It was characterised by a strong technical base and detailed musical exploration of core repertoire. In David, the more advanced player, sophisticated learning was taking place. He was deeply engaged in his work as well as being driven by an agenda of achievement and professional success. He was also becoming aware of and interested in the processes of learning, although these aspects of his development did not seem to feature in his lessons. Both he and Brian were immensely focused on their work, and had little interest in the wider curriculum. On the surface this did not seem to have an adverse effect, but with Brian there was a sense that professional life was looming, and as yet he had relatively little awareness of the specific skills he might need, and did not seem to be developing metacognitive

processes to support ongoing learning. The relationships formed with Amanda were intense and committed, and extended into regular social interaction. It had not always been a successful relationship with David, rather it had evolved alongside his interest and commitment to the instrument. Both students appreciated the intensity of the relationship and felt it contributed to their learning.

### **Personal development and autonomy in learning: Lawrence (4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate), Penny (2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate) and Steve (teacher)**

#### ***Introduction***

This case involved one teacher (Steve) and two students (Lawrence, a fourth year undergraduate, and Penny, a second year undergraduate). There was an important difference from the case with Amanda, David and Brian, in that here the students had several teachers for their principal study. Lawrence and Penny described their principal study teachers as utterly different, but appreciated the contrasts. So, for example, Penny considered one to be business-like in character and teaching style, liking to work fast:

Penny: [teacher A]- he gets on very quickly, you come in and it's like "right- Penny, we've got a lot to get through now" ... you sit down with [the instrument]. And then he's like "Right, there are three different types of [particular technique]...", so you get going. I think that is quite good, because basically he is giving you everything he knows just like that. Sometimes, there isn't room for deviation I find, and you have to be very, very assertive to deviate it.

The second was methodical, and presented a structured programme starting with the fundamentals of instrumental technique:

Penny: .....it's all very organised [with teacher B], in the first year, we have a certain group of exercises we have to learn, and then we learn some [studies] before we go on

to the [particular set of repertoire], and once we have learnt all the different techniques we need from those things, we can then apply it to the [repertoire], but we can't start the [repertoire] until we have done that. So really coming to college was going back to basics again, starting all over again, working up, which is really good, I think it's very necessary.

Steve, in contrast, had a more relaxed approach:

Penny: Steve is very kind of laid back in a way. He will be like "so what do you want to do today, you just say?" ....complete opposite, exactly, and that is good.

The teacher-student relationships with Steve were characterised by a more hands-off approach on the part of the teacher, and the content of lessons and the repertoire learned was more driven by the students. It was up to Lawrence and Penny, for example, to book a lesson with Steve when they felt ready for it, and Steve responded to them to the extent that they became involved and interested in the work. Penny reported that initially this approach was demanding, because it was so different from her previous experience and required that she take more responsibility for the pace and content of her work:

Penny: When I first came to Guildhall I think I found it quite difficult having to choose what I do in a lesson, because my teachers had always been quite kind of driving at me before that, and I sort of and wanted that still. I felt that I still needed that, but I guess then that's part of growing up.... Now, I can see that and use it to my advantage. So, yeah, I see that as an opening for me to basically work on what I want .....

The teaching interactions and content of this one-to-one tuition encouraged the students to become more autonomous as learners, and professionally there was a bigger range of possibilities in the minds of both teacher and students. In contrast with Amanda, David and Brian, there were also more defined boundaries around the one-to-one relationship, and neither Steve nor the two students wished to socialise together.

### *Lawrence and Penny - aims and processes*

Penny and Lawrence both characterised their aims in learning first and foremost in personal terms. Penny focused on her own psychological approach to being a musician and performer:

Penny: Most of all being free from any inhibitions actually. Although that's not necessarily up to the college to do that, I think it does very well anyway in that way, it really trains us well to loosen up a bit.

For Lawrence, personal development was more important even than musical development:

Lawrence: ... for example if I take [teacher B], if you put the individual as more important than the music then it seems to work better... When I wanted to [take a year out], [teacher B] wasn't like "oh that's awful, your music is going to suffer, that's the wrong thing", he was "if that is what you want to do then you have got to do it",..... and that was really, really great because now hopefully I am going to get a degree.

Penny articulated some strong ideas about the multiple skills she would need as a professional musician and how she was developing these, although this was not always as a direct result of input from her lessons in the college:

Penny: I would like to have a very thorough technique ... by the time I leave, everybody would! But that is really up to me to practise ... it's a difficult one that. I mean, in an ideal world you would want to know as much music as possible, having studied the scores and listened to the CD's. You would want to be a very good public speaker; you would want to have the skill of promoting yourself.... I think that is a very important skill for people to have by the time they leave, ... to know how to push themselves forward, not in a kind of not in an over-the-top way, but in a way that shows that they respect themselves as a musician to other people, because that's the only way they are going get taken on.

She was also attracted to teaching, and relished the challenge of what she perceived as



meeting the needs of very different people:

Penny: When I teach ... I am totally focused on something else and somebody else, and to be achieving something in them, getting them to do something ... you know it feels really good.....just sort of the challenge that you are presented with, and you get so many different people, and you can't teach the same way twice.

How much her experiences with one-to-one tuition were helping her to respond to individual needs as a teacher was questionable, but in describing the differences between her own teachers, it was clear that she was at least being exposed to many different approaches.

Lawrence on the other hand, was vaguer about the skills he might need. Particular skills he was developing he saw as directly relating to his future, but despite being clear that he wanted to get involved in teaching immediately after leaving college, he was not taking advantage of the resources currently on offer to him to prepare for this, for example, by building up a bibliography and library of ensemble repertoire, or improvisation techniques:

Lawrence: I am pleased that I have got the basic musicianship skills so I can improve myself, I do know about harmony now ... so I can study harmony myself ... I can study scores, study symphonies, I can study composition by myself. I have just about now reached basic piano level, so I can start to improve it and accompany people. It's basic, but I believe I could take it somewhere, and I am also pleased that I have got quite a lot of experience in ... ensembles, doing a lot of ... chamber groups, ...which can be handy because it will be really easy to run ... groups when I leave here.

Both Lawrence and Penny had lots of ideas about their future careers, and were able to think in practical concrete terms about balancing earning a living with artistic satisfaction and continuing development. Lawrence was more definite about his

immediate path, but Penny too articulated a whole series of things she would like to do, including theatre directing and working as a musician with actors. Lawrence was going to move away from professional performance and focus on teaching for a while, whilst he developed further skills as a singer.

In contrast to David and Brian, Lawrence and Penny were also actively engaged with playing different instruments in addition to their principal study: Penny was keeping up a second, unrelated instrument which had been her principal study right up until the time of applying for music college, and was also developing skills through jazz piano lessons. Lawrence was also working at keyboard skills, particularly to develop harmonic awareness and keyboard harmony skills, and was also becoming increasingly committed to singing lessons. This brought them into contact with even more different approaches to teaching and learning, through the different demands of these disciplines, the repertoire, and the differences in the strategies used by the teachers.

Like David and Brian, Penny and Lawrence conceptualised the interactions in one-to-one tuition, particularly with Steve, as a process informed by joint enthusiasm between teacher and student. For them, the focus in lessons was on music first and foremost as opposed to instrumental issues, and the open sharing of experience on the part of the teachers:

Penny: ... they talk about music rather than just [the instrument], ...because that is what it is. We want to come out of here being a musician and not just an instrumentalist. You can say “look how fast I can play” but it is not about that. They all are amazing musicians, and they can really ... share their experience with us, which is brilliant. ...what I like most is the talk about music....

Lawrence also emphasised his impression that the teachers' approached the students as young professionals, young colleagues:

Lawrence: ... understanding and treating me or any Guildhall student more as they are, verging towards the professional player, so then there is not so much more dictation in lessons.

Furthermore, both Penny and Lawrence underlined the need to become autonomous and pursue their own musical pathways. Lawrence, however, also suggested that a certain level of ability needed to be reached before students could start to develop their own particular characteristics in playing:

HG: That point when you do really, really do start to develop your own characteristics of playing, that is quite an important one isn't it?

Lawrence: It is really important. I don't know how many people get to that level, obviously some do, .....some people don't, I don't know, but I would say I am getting to that point now.

This perception fitted with the ideas expressed by Amanda and David, and their sense of progression in instrumental learning at this level. Lawrence went on to acknowledge how difficult this process could be, especially when developing instrumental skills when his teacher was such an expert. In this context it was difficult to do something of his own which might depart from the path which the teacher followed:

HG: Can you say more about that how would you want to develop your playing?

Lawrence: Just to make it sound more the way I want the [instrument] to sound, ... it could potentially be a very arrogant thing to say because you do have to have a point where you say "I need to learn it by myself now", and it is hard to know when that is, ... because your teachers do know more than you often, definitely Steve does know more about it than me! So it is hard to get that balance between taking from them and yet at the same time saying "actually I want to do it my way".

Nevertheless, there were ways in which Steve encouraged them towards this:

Lawrence: [Steve's] approach is to learn as much repertoire as possible, and then just take lots of different aspects of the repertoire and grow from it. Steve is never the type where he is going to insist that something is perfect, he is never going to want you to play something, and then you take that away for months and months and just absolutely get it perfect. He would rather you learnt five different things in the same time, then take different things about it, because his approach is more, in time if you experiment with more things, then bit by bit by bit you are going to get better on all of them.

At the same time, when detailed, sustained work was required for pieces being prepared for important performances, this was supported by Steve.

### ***Lawrence and Penny - the one-to-one relationship***

Penny and Lawrence both characterised the one-to-one relationship with Steve as informal and friendly. Penny had huge respect for her teachers, but nevertheless found them incredibly approachable:

Penny: you have a lot of respect for them obviously, but at the same time they are very humane.....I don't think we get intimidated by it, but ... you should never lose the feeling that they have got the greater experience, and they are up there compared with us, and that shouldn't be lost.

Lawrence was also inspired by the supportive and enthusiastic approach of his teachers:

Lawrence: I think I have had good role model teachers here, all my teachers have been really supportive, really enthusiastic, you know I have seen a lot of music teachers who ... aren't like that, who are a bit dull (not the ones here), not very approachable as people..... I have had music teachers who've put me down, and they can screw you up basically, and you can't focus your mind, and if you can't focus your mind, you aren't going to learn, and the only way to focus your mind is being in a relaxed environment, where you feel that your teacher wants you to do that.

Although the relationship with Steve seemed to be relaxed, Lawrence and Penny nevertheless both wanted to keep clear boundaries around this as a teacher-pupil relationship, and avoided socialising with the teacher:

Penny: I feel quite strongly in a way about people being friends with their teachers, because in a way I disagree with that.... I think you do lose that boundary and it should still be there, otherwise you can't function in a teacher/student way in a lesson, probably it could hinder your progress, either that or you get favouritism or things like that.

Penny also described missing a degree of discipline and directives in her lessons, and felt that there were times when this would be good for her:

Penny: ....occasionally I wish someone would give me a kick up the backside, I really do.... it's not a negative thing particularly

HG: Just to work harder or?

Penny: Not necessarily to work harder, but to achieve a result during the lesson, because I think sometimes ... being nice about it isn't what you need....I will play something, and sometimes I'll just think "oh my god, that was so awful", and they will say "you know, it wasn't that bad", or "we all play badly sometimes", and say things like that. I would rather they just said "it was a bit crap wasn't it!" It wouldn't have to be nasty but just be like in agreement.

HG: Why is that important to you?

Penny: It is important to me because it shows that they have faith in me that I can do better.... They aren't accepting that's all I can do.

She missed a more authoritarian approach, and might have enjoyed a dose of Amanda. She had not, however, communicated this to Steve, but was more inclined to accept his teaching at face value, rather than considering that there were possibilities to negotiate its emphases and style. This perspective seemed to counter her view of teaching and learning as being an openly shared enterprise. The aspect of communication with her

teachers had in fact been quite an issue for her in the first two years of being at college. Her expectations of the interactions from previous experiences had been quite different, and she had had to go through a process of adjusting these:

Penny: I have had bad lessons and good lessons all along. I think that when I first came to Guildhall, I didn't really talk enough to my teachers, I was still kind of in my pre-college mode of thinking that ...I wasn't supposed to talk to them. So lessons didn't go so well then.... I did want to talk to them actually, but ... I just didn't somehow, and I think that in a way that then everything was a little bit stilted, and perhaps there was not a natural flow to the process of learning, because of the lack of just being an open person, .....I guess I just wasn't really very confident, and I've just relaxed a bit more as I went on.... in the past I had experienced a lot of teachers who had not been very nice to me, not musical [teachers] necessarily, but like school and stuff. I kind of expected the whole world to be against me when I came, but it wasn't in fact true at all. It was quite shocking for me to find that it was the other way round! Everyone was completely on your side.

In a similar vein, Lawrence was not particularly communicative with his teachers about his own responses to the teaching. He had been incredibly inspired by a suggestion from one teacher early on in his time at the college, and felt that putting this suggestion into practice had put him back in touch with his own love for music and motivation at a crucial point. He had not, however, ever told the teacher this. It was not clear exactly why Penny and Lawrence did not communicate these issues to their teachers. To a degree they accepted the way Steve taught as something fixed, not something that could change or be negotiated. They had both suffered bad teacher-student relationships in the past, and reported difficulties with confidence arising in part from these past experiences. This may have generated some anxiety about the interactions, and have contributed to their reluctance to communicate these things to Steve. On the other hand, unquestioning acceptance of a teacher's style was also a feature of David and Brian's

response to Amanda, suggesting that this might also be a feature of the investment of trust in the teacher.

In contrast to David and Brian, the relationships established with Steve (which were less intense and personal than those with Amanda) did not immediately bolster Penny and Lawrence's confidence, rather they were encouraged to be themselves, to explore diverse musical and performance opportunities, and to follow their own interests. This might help to build confidence, but in a slower way based on intrinsic resilience and conviction about what they were doing. This was evident in Lawrence's courage to follow his own path which was quite different from his teachers, even though he had achieved a high level as an instrumentalist. Nevertheless, Lawrence appeared to have developed some long-term confidence about his path, he actively referred to his own lack of self-confidence, and was clearly appreciative of a different teacher who in his individual lessons managed to make him feel immediately better, and more assured about his potential and achievement:

Lawrence: ... I feel it, and it comes across, I do look miserable and he just completely lifts me up and he knows. I'm really glad that he does, he doesn't say "I can't be bothered with that", ... he genuinely makes me feel like I have got a good voice! And I can get somewhere! And he has told me, he's not just trying to fob me off, that's the truth, but he does make me feel good about my potential and gives me that boost of energy.....

This kind of support was undoubtedly appealing for him as a student, and demonstrated perhaps some underlying tension between the immediate boost of self-confidence which might come from a teacher, and more permanent building of self-confidence through developing responsibility and autonomy in learning.

### *Lawrence and Penny – the context of one-to-one tuition*

Alongside what appeared to be a wide range of inspiring lessons, neither of these students organised or planned. They were both extremely busy, but there was a sense of breathlessness about the pace with which they moved from one thing to the next, and as with David and Brian, there was hardly any evidence of ongoing reflection-on-action:

Penny: I auditioned for an orchestra last year because I got a leaflet in my pigeon hole, and ... I have chosen all my platform pieces by myself.....I haven't really thought about what I am going to play until a week before! Then I suddenly think "well the only thing I can do is that", and so I will do that.

HG: ... Do you make notes about your lessons or record them?

Penny: I haven't ever recorded them, because I only recently acquired a mini disc player, but I could...I tend to be rushing off to something else usually after that.....

Neither Penny nor Lawrence tended to use audio or video recording as a means of feedback and reflection on their work. This was similar to David and Brian. Penny was at her most reflective and organised when planning her individual practice:

Penny: ... what I have been trying to do, so that I don't waste time when I am practising, is write down all the different types of scales that you can possibly do .... Because that is my kind of main goal this year, is to get better at [specific area of technique], because I have been really weak there..... I have written a whole list of all the different combinations of scales, and then I am ... trying to ...do a key at a time, but one aspect of the key each time I practise. It takes ages, but hopefully the process will speed up. So I do that, and then I balance out the practice with doing pieces...

She also picked up ideas about practising from her peers (in contrast to David and Brian's experience), whom she would often see practising in the college:

Penny: You can see people practising sometimes and ... get an idea of how focused they are or what they are doing. There are some people that tend to just play a lot, play a lot of pieces, and there are some people who really, really like grind themselves hard,



....

HG: What would that be, lots of scales, or technique?

Penny: Lots of technique, ... a metronome is always ticking in there always [refers to student A]. [Student B] on the other hand tends to like playing ... a lot of pieces.....It's very, very different, she often bashes through something, it doesn't matter with her what notes she has hit wrong, it doesn't matter anyway. But it is good because she gets through a lot of music. In a way you have to get an overall picture of music. You can't always get stuck in one place, so I have been trying to take a leaf out of her book recently, actually. Trying to balance out my practice a bit more with that, and I thought maybe sight-reading practice would help as well. That always teaches you to just go through it, ... you can't stop...

In contrast, Lawrence felt that he did not want any input on practising from teachers, because he felt this did not work, and he needed to find his own way:

Lawrence: ....none of my teachers have ever taught me how to practise, and I am not sure if necessarily it would work if they tried, because it tends to get a bit too fanatical, I think. I remember one time [a visiting instrumentalist] came in, ... he was very specific about the way he practised, and I went to try, and did that, it just didn't work for me. You know the way he was making it sound was like this is the only way to practise, and I hope he doesn't try and teach his pupils that. You have to find your own way of doing things, I think, eventually.

He did not seem to pick things up about practising from his peers. On the other hand, he did not particularly think that he practised well in general, and was aware of limitations:

Lawrence: Well from an objective point of view, I know sometimes it is not that good for me, I waste a lot of the time practising, .... I don't practise well while I am here for a start, because I am not happy, so the only way to play a piece well is if you are enjoying it, and if you're trying to put the emotion into it, it makes a huge difference.

Penny and Lawrence also had quite different attitudes to their peer group. Lawrence was wary of working in groups, and reported that whilst in one-to-one lessons he felt he

could be himself and confident, in groups he felt uncomfortable and under pressure to compete:

Lawrence: I am awful in groups, really negative. I don't like groups, I compete, I don't feel confident. ...That is a hard thing that you have got to try to avoid when you are at music colleges, is not to compete, you are not there to compete, ...but it does happen and I get very negative about it.....

The element of competition and fear around his approach here resonated with Brian's experience of the group performance class.

In contrast, Penny's perception of the college atmosphere, and the attitudes within her own peer group were more positive, and she felt supported in her aims:

Penny: Well I think the ... kind of general atmosphere is so supportive, and when you are doing a platform you don't feel like really kind of judged or anything, you feel like ... everybody is on your side. Things like that, and having to actually talk about the pieces and stuff, it's so good to do that now because when you are older you don't think of it as a big thing, ... maybe we could do even with more of that kind of thing.

It was not clear from the interview data where the big differences in Lawrence and Penny's attitudes to the peer group and practising originated, but it seemed that their one-to-one lessons were not having much of an impact on their approaches.

### ***Steve - aims and processes***

Steve's outlook on teaching was very much coloured by his own experiences of being a student in a conservatoire, and then moulding his own career. He felt that the teaching he received was based on the narrow frame of the teachers' own professional experiences at the time, and lacked engagement beyond these experiences. Steve had not in fact thrived in this environment, but had been willing to find his own rather

different pathway. Looking back on his student days, he realised how little support he had in fact had from his teachers:

Steve: I learnt that if as a teacher how you inform pupils is related too closely to your day-to-day professional life, then you're narrowing it down, you have to have a broader view, and you have to have an idea of what you think the function of that particular instrument .... is. My teachers just told me what they knew, which was basically what they did in their orchestra, which was revealing, but the quality of the lessons would fluctuate according to how interested they were in their job....And if they were thrilled by various pieces, then their teaching would spark up a bit, and if they were having a dull time, not doing very much, if they didn't have a rigour to how they organised it, then you learnt very little.

His own career had evolved in a unconventional way, and he was now extremely busy professionally. Interestingly this generated a work pattern, similar to Lawrence and Penny, which allowed almost no time in which to stop, reflect on and evaluate what was going on:

Steve: ... I was very flattered to be asked [to teach at the Guildhall]..... I couldn't actually particularly work out why I'd been asked, .....and I was in the thick of what I was doing, I hadn't actually ever evaluated it, but running round the country like a complete idiot, doing various music clubs and eating cheese sandwiches at midnight.....

In response to these experiences, Steve had broad, holistic aims for his students:

Steve: to leave with the ability to play professionally if they want to, but only if they really want to, and the ability to work with people, whether it's performing or teaching, if it's a musical context, and if not to work in music, just to be confident, easy to work with, to know that you've got more skills than your job necessarily requires....other skills you can bring in.....people who are good at working in a team, also co-operative and collaborative....those kinds of general, decent values are useful. I think people who are continually curious.....

He placed these aims unequivocally in a culture of musical change, and a realistic

understanding of the many different careers which students might eventually pursue:

Steve: You can't have people leaving who are good musicians but are passive and servile, who only play the dots up until half past ten, that's a dying breed....so I'm happy if people leave as great [specific instrument] players and great improvisers, neither of which I do, but they find their way into those areas, or they're very good as community musicians or the greatest amateurs, because they're much more useful, the whole point of the musician is to be useful, to be useful to the society you're in....be of help and assistance... if musicians are good at working with people, then they'll be better understood, be better respected and get better paid and work more often.

He was particularly concerned with generating a learning environment whereby students would be able to uncover and follow individual interests:

Steve: I think the most important thing to give a student is a sense of autonomy, so you don't have to tell them what to do all the time, and as a student I didn't want to be told what to do because I could naturally think for myself, and if somebody said, "play this way," I'd want to know why.....and work out why it was good before doing it rather than just copy...because it wouldn't feel natural.

He found, however, that particularly when students first arrived in the college they often did not feel it was their place to think and work in an autonomous way:

Steve: in the first year and a half or so there is quite a lot of feeling that you ought to do what you are told, which goes, without necessarily trying to understand why, but you might have to revise things in the second or early third year, they haven't quite taken it in, because they don't think they should be thinking for themselves.

He also perceived that many of the students tended to feel anxious and so be constricted in their playing:

Steve: .... some students come a little timidly and are worried about being wrong a lot of the time...some are always keen to impress people because they depend on their parents' approval....they've been through a pressurised system with lots of goals...

In lessons, therefore, he used strategies for creating space and time for the students, and a chance to be curious, rather than presenting lots of information, or focusing

immediately on musical and technical detail and so narrowing horizons. He deliberately used a great variety of music in terms of style and difficulty, and created diverse playing and performing contexts, including ensembles, to stimulate the students into becoming thinking musicians, able to make sense of their experiences and translate learning from one musical context to another:

Steve: .....here it's about, as well as the assessments, it's about self-improvement, self-development.....so you are a clearly thinking musician by the time you leave ....I couldn't wait to leave...and wanted to think for myself, but ideally they won't be quite at that point., there will be frustrations and they will wish to move on, but particularly through the second half of the course they should feel that they are feeding as much as they can off what is going on. So we make sure ... there's a lot of different music styles going on.....so there's always something new to discover.....there's always something new to discover when you're a professional. We'll play very, very easy pieces, and we'll play really quite difficult pieces, and if we say look at some Xenakis, .... I'll explain how it's imaginatively conceived, but very poorly implemented and poorly written out, how frankly a lot of it is garbage in terms of notation, and how you get round that... So they have to think laterally, and they go back to some classical studies, some Bach, and they think about it maybe a bit more meticulously.

The conceptualisation presented here was closer to Biggs' framework of rich learning contexts stimulating learning in higher education (Biggs 1999), than to Schon's conceptualisation of apprenticeship (Schon 1983). The approach was quite different from Amanda's, but at the same time, when he described some of the interactions which might go on in lessons, similar processes of collaborative reflection-in-action on repertoire emerged to the ones described by Amanda, David and Brian, although they included a wider variety of tools such as improvisation and singing:

HG: how do you get them interested in phrasing?

Steve: by singing horrendously to them a lot....I'm not very good at singing, just showing how a certain piece can have different shapes and different sounds.....and by getting them to sing back and to examine very fastidiously certain things that they do, certain bars, certain phrases.....and getting them to play a certain thing in many different ways....also just using metaphors and any imaginative analogy that seems appropriate at the time, so they realise that there are a variety of ways they can use to transform material.....and also getting them to improvise on certain bits of pieces.....So they don't feel a slave to the stave. Also getting a reasonable amount of discussion going about what they're doing....very rarely do I have someone come in and play a piece and give a series of bullet points which don't have any context really: "you must play this louder....a lighter touch at the end" etc.....so if they haven't got it already, and maybe about two-thirds haven't, we need to foster a natural curiosity as to what they can do with their instruments....

The range of tools appeared to be greater than those used by Amanda, indicative perhaps of Steve's broader focus and understanding of potential careers for his students.

### ***Steve - the one-to-one relationship***

Steve conceived the relationship with his students as one of joint exploration, mutually satisfying, and a two-way process:

Steve: one of the most important things is that a student will always feel able to ask any question they like about music and playing, and they will not be afraid that they'll be wrong...they know they can work and do their best, and they'll get a fair hearing.....it will be productive and creatively useful.....from their side the commitment to work over a span of time, and get the most out of it that they can, going both ways....so they feel that they're actually working together with you, and not just receiving stuff... the relationship goes both ways....and although I am a professional musician, I am fallible and most of the things I am teaching to them I've worked out through trial and error....

He maintained one clear boundary of not socialising with the students, but felt that

otherwise the relationships functioned well and did not need further boundaries articulated:

Steve: I don't think of it in terms of boundaries otherwise....if people are having a productive working relationship, everyone's quite straight forward with each other....

He acknowledged that his approach was quite relaxed, non-authoritarian, and based on the premise that students were motivated and worked well together until proved otherwise. He was quite clear about why he taught in this particular way, although he hardly discussed its potential limitations, and was not seemingly aware that students might in some cases need firmer support and direction.

#### *Steve – the context of one-to-one tuition*

Steve was involved in a lot of ensemble work, directing regular projects with the students and sometimes playing himself as well. He considered this to be a crucial part of the learning environment which could provide different and carefully-tailored challenges which would not be possible in one-to-one lessons:

Steve: .....it really depends on involving people according to their skill as it is....sometimes we put students in pieces who aren't quite up to it, but learn an awful lot, and if it is a very complex piece then they can be hidden , and we're quite prepared for that to happen.

It was also an environment where he could vary his own role a lot:

Steve: we do talk about it in ensemble,....I will direct things in different ways, either very hands on or the opposite. So as not to surprise them too much I will tell them how I'm going to run something...what I'm not going to do, or for the next half hour it's pencils out .....but there'll be other times where .....we'll just get together in a room and start playing, and by not talking, playing something, having a break, playing again, you can say at the end "that was good, it was good because of...", and "this can easily be rectified", rather than the spotlight on people.

It was significant, however, that although Penny found she benefited greatly from the ensemble work, Lawrence was much less positive, and it was not clear whether or not Steve was aware of this.

### ***Summary***

Penny and Lawrence both focused on personal development through their lessons with Steve, and on becoming autonomous as learners. This contrasted with David and Brian's approach, although they were also concerned with technical development, and Lawrence considered that it was difficult to start coming up with his own musical and instrumental ideas until he had an advanced technical foundation. They both had a range of ideas about their future careers, and were clearly excited about these, although they did not necessarily reflect their teachers' careers. They were more disparate in their sense of the skills and resources they would need as professionals, and how they might acquire these.

Lawrence and Penny reported their relationships with Steve to be friendly and relaxed, not intimidating in any way. The joint enthusiasm they identified in lessons was similar to the ideas expressed by David and Brian. On the other hand, they had no further social interactions with Steve beyond the lessons. Penny missed a more authoritarian approach at times, and interestingly neither of them was particularly communicative with Steve or their other teachers about important aspects of the interactions and what they had learned. Both reported difficulties with a lack of confidence, even though they were



motivated and articulate about their careers. Perhaps the very fact that they were able to acknowledge their lack of self-confidence showed more fundamental confidence in themselves than, for example, Brian.

Neither Lawrence nor Penny was particularly organised about planning their work and their use of time, even though both were extremely busy. There was more evidence in their day-to-day work of reflection-in-action than reflection-on-action. Penny was more interested and able to learn from her peer group, whereas Lawrence had considerable difficulties with this. As with David and Brian, Penny and Lawrence absorbed and internalised many of the approaches which their teachers offered. This included appreciation of diverse teaching styles and techniques, and an interest in different career paths.

### **Awareness of tension between vocational apprenticeship and independence in students: Daniel (1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate) and Sally (teacher)**

#### ***Introduction***

This case involved a single teacher-student pair: Sally and Daniel, a first year undergraduate. Daniel was in his first year of lessons with Sally. He had been playing since he was seven years old, had also been a chorister, and now had a major additional interest in composition. He was not, therefore, focused exclusively on his instrument. Although the lessons were characterised by vocational apprenticeship, Sally was in sympathy with Daniel's broader interests and, as a result, they covered a wide range of

repertoire, including contemporary music. He described Sally as “very human” and an “approachable person”. The combination of easy personal interaction and deep and wide-ranging personal engagement in the music on both sides meant that the relationship worked well.

### *Daniel - aims and processes*

Daniel was beginning to consider a range of career possibilities, including combining his skills as a composer-player, and so recreating an age-old tradition currently less in fashion:

HG:...so you could end up having a dual career, doing bits of composing and ..

Daniel: That could be very interesting, there aren't many composer/[instrumentalists], there was an age when it was the composer/[instrumentalist], ... there could be something in that you know, not only playing standard repertoire but also the concerts of new music by yourself .....

Composition was a source of excitement, and a means of deep engagement with a wide variety of music. Daniel reported that his composition teacher was always getting him to listen to new things, “to open my mind I think more than anything, to expand the possibilities.” As a result he maintained an open-minded approach, and was always keen to explore new things. He did not perceive his instrumental playing and composition to be fundamentally in conflict, even though there were difficulties with time constraints at college: rather they seemed to inform each other, and the combination of activities was motivating.

Daniel was never short of questions for Sally, and consequently their interactions in lessons were characterised by dialogue and joint exploration. The work was often

extremely detailed, but she did not impose interpretations on him as the student, and there were times when he was able to articulate his own ideas, frustrations at not being able to turn these into practice, and she would then help him move towards realising the ideas more effectively:

Daniel: In the first movement [of a sonata], there is a point when the second subject comes in, it's very different, total contrast, and I was getting the contrast but it wasn't special, the sound wasn't anything special, and in my mind it was very frustrating because I wanted something different; ... and Sally would demonstrate, and the difference in sound, you could hear it immediately.... and I would say "yes, that is what I want. That's what I want to do, how do I do it?" We talk about this physical relaxing getting the sound, and timing as well, I was perhaps rushing into it, so it was a case of the three crotchet rests which followed, which were prior to the new section, I had to give them their full length, I was thinking about when the next section comes, and even just a fraction of time can change the whole sound of the next section. If it is a tiny bit early, you have ruined it already, it's amazing, the little things make the difference, and it suddenly clicked and from that point onwards, I was able to get to that when I wanted it...

Here the level of detail which they reached, and Sally's demonstration, were key to empowering Daniel. The pace of the lessons was, however, the one aspect which Daniel was uncomfortable about at times. He suggested that he would appreciate points being made and then moving on, rather than staying with a single issue for a longer time.

Daniel was also aware that one of his goals was to be able to teach himself, and that this would be an ongoing process which would develop throughout life:

Daniel: ... very important is an understanding of the way to work on music, because at the end of the day, you are going to have to be your own teacher. Though you can always study and play masterclasses and listen to players, take advice, play to people, you need to be your own teacher because most of the work, if you do it yourself, is 90% that.... you can't just say "right teach me how to learn, how to learn my pieces". It is

more than that, it is a whole four years and then it is longer, it is a lifetime to really learn how to work with pieces.

HG: ...how do you think you are acquiring that skill?

Daniel: Partly by Sally making sure I do wide range of repertoire, then you are focusing on as many things as possible, completely contrasting things....

The variety of repertoire which they covered meant that Daniel felt he was picking up many different strategies for working, and would in time feel that he would have a good idea of how to approach any new piece he encountered. He felt that he was absorbing these strategies and techniques subconsciously more than anything, although he also suggested that he would take time during the long vacation to reflect on his practising skills and what had developed:

Daniel: I do appreciate the guidance very much, but I think, I think it's more subconsciously I'm learning things. I haven't really actually sat down, I probably will this summer, and think "how have I worked and how have I been able to practise, what I am practising?"

### ***Daniel - the one-to-one relationship***

The relationship which Daniel formed with Sally clearly helped him to relax and become less tense as a performer, so allowing him to engage more freely with the music and channel his expression:

Daniel: I can always stop at any point and ask her to explain something again, or if I want to ask her something, it is very easy to do so, and it is not a case of "shut up, we're working on this at the minute", it's very open, which is very important because then you don't feel inhibited, and as a performer you need to feel very relaxed.....

Nevertheless he was currently fairly dependent on Sally to help with both technical and musical issues. He was keen to have lessons five hours long, as there was never enough time to cover the material he had prepared! He also seemed to be quite dependent on her

for choice of repertoire, which was surprising perhaps, given his knowledge of music and contemporary pieces in particular. He showed great respect, however, for Sally's ability to choose repertoire for him which would help develop particular aspects of his technique or musical expression:

Daniel: I played .....[a] virtuosic piece, very lively, lots of contrasting sections, ...you really need to concentrate for it, very hard, and it took a lot of practice, months and months of work, before I did it for a competition and for my platform this term. Basically, she said she was giving it to me to push me and open me out, because I am often an introvert performer and person.....

HG: How did you get on with it?

Daniel: Slowly at first, because until you are really comfortable with the notes and you have it in your memory, it is difficult to relax properly at the keyboard. But once I had, then a lot of good things happened, and I felt that it really did change me definitely....it did open me out, and encouraged me to want to learn more, some ridiculously difficult pieces because I think "why not?"

Daniel also relied on Sally particularly when getting close to an exam or important performance. At these times he needed a stronger directing voice, to help calm him down and counter his tendency to panic:

Daniel: ... near to exam time Sally will often say "work on this, will you work on that for me". She will focus my practice more which is what you need ... when it is close to exam time and it is very easy to panic. To play everything through and try to practise everything, and you don't always know what you are doing. You have to be very specific, I think at that stage, and your teacher guides you.

### ***Daniel – the context of one-to-one tuition***

Daniel was one of the few students interviewed who were able to make real connections between one-to-one tuition and other parts of the curriculum, for example, harmony and

aural classes. His technical understanding of composition here perhaps helped, but it is also possible that his open outlook on his studies also facilitated the integration. In spite of the long hours invested in practice, he maintained a holistic approach to his work. This was also reflected in his attitude to his lessons, with a wide range of different repertoires being covered, and also an understanding that personal issues had an important role in development, even though these were not discussed in detail:

Daniel: Obviously having got to the lesson and talked to the teacher about how the week was, any problems you have had, that is always first. They're good at asking me how it's been, has it been busy because they need to know quite importantly about personal things ....as they will be confused if the work is insufficient for the lesson.....

As with most of the students, however, there was little evidence of reflection-on-action in an ongoing structure with Daniel, nor did this seem to form part of his lessons. He did not use audio or video recording as a means of feedback, was not particularly involved with his peer group, and was not planning any particular strategies towards developing his career other than through generally improving as a musician as much as he could.

### *Sally*

The match between Sally and Daniel clearly worked well. Daniel benefited from the supportive atmosphere, Sally's expertise, and their joint enthusiasm for the music. In turn he was highly motivated and could easily absorb what Sally had to offer musically. Daniel seemed to be one of those people whom Sally said she did not really need to think about too much, "the positive ones take care of themselves." They entered into dialogue and detailed communication, and this fitted with Sally's characterisation of the key factors in a good teacher-student relationship:

Sally: it's that level of understanding and that similarity of thought. I was teaching someone just now... she's nice but she doesn't hear a word I say, for whatever reason...I've noticed that when you're teaching somebody like that ... I dry up. Whereas when I'm teaching someone who is like-minded, they get the most out of you, don't they... they're more open.

Sally's concerns were more with the students who, in this environment, were functioning less well, apparently lacked motivation or achieved less high standards. She agonised in the interview about how she could adapt her teaching to support them more effectively:

Sally: I don't want them to get so familiar that they feel it's too comfortable, do you see what I mean? I want them to be able to tell me how they feel, but I don't want to be this austere authoritarian figure, but at the same time if it helps them... it might help them a bit if I was more like that.

Her chief consideration seemed to be whether or not she put enough pressure on the students:

Sally: I think I'm quite open with them... I guess that's one of the things I've been wondering about, ... whether I'm too open... and whether that puts enough stress on the lesson, because I think sometimes a degree of fear is not a bad thing. Sometimes if I'm too open, I think that that stress level is too low.

### ***Sally - aims and processes***

Sally was conscious of the professional world which awaited the students. Very few would succeed primarily as professional performers, and the work available was continually diminishing. This presented dilemmas for teachers in terms of what they should be teaching students, why and how. Consequently she focused her aims in teaching on musical independence and a realistic attitude in terms of the transition to professional life:

Sally: ... quite a high degree of independence...musical thinking, yes so they're not relying on you for a lesson before they play, and they've grown as well. They're usually quite naive when they come... mostly, there are some that aren't.....so you have to sort of expand them, and then if they can feel happy with themselves really, as well as being independent, whatever level they are, that they are alright with that. I don't like to think that people are built up to be a certain thing and then finding that that's not possible when they leave here.... I think they should be prepared for that before they leave.

Sally reflected on her own career, and the realities of balancing performing, teaching, personal and financial needs. She loved performing, but was also drawn to teaching: "I quite like being able to help other people if you can, and working with the music is quite a privilege sometimes", and found that this was easier and more stable alongside other commitments. This aspect of being a professional musician, however, was not something which became a feature of her teaching. She wanted her students to become independent by the time they left college, but expressed this largely in terms of them developing independence musically and instrumentally. Her view was that through working on the music and these aspects of autonomy, the students would be able to translate them to other contexts.

In keeping, perhaps, with her approach of supporting a student, and encouraging them to become independent, Sally would demonstrate in her lessons but only to a limited degree, and with particular aims in mind of giving an impression of something, rather than giving a detailed model:

Sally: I'll always play it myself, that's one thing... and also I think it's quite good to be able to express it verbally... a bit of demonstration, but not too much. I'll only demonstrate something if more for a physical gesture... I tend not to demonstrate to say, "this is how it sounds."

HG: so you'll just use words?



Sally: no... sounds or articulation... I don't like it if they say, "will you play it for me so I know how it sounds?" I don't like that, so I don't do that.

HG: because they may copy you?

Sally: yes...but if it's a gesture or something....

On the other hand, whilst she identified one or two unusual teaching ideas, in general there was little variation in the lessons. Students would play through some repertoire, and they would then work on it together, discussing, demonstrating and trying out practice techniques for certain passages. This approach was closer to Amanda's than to Steve's, although her aims in teaching her students were more aligned with Steve's. It seemed that it was in part at least sustained by the pressure she felt in preparing students for assessments:

Sally: Unfortunately I find that the exams really take over. So at the beginning of the year, when we start off we say that the exams are just part of the work you're doing here anyway... but I don't want you just to learn what you've got for the exam.... But often that's what you end up doing, it's so frustrating.

The rather narrow focus which these assessments imposed was reflected also in the little interest Sally showed in other processes which could be used in lessons and with students. Audio recording was only something she encouraged students to do for themselves shortly before concerts. She had never used video recording, and said that she herself felt self-conscious about it. Improvisation did not feature. She knew little about how her students practised at home:

Sally: I ask them sometimes [about practice]. I try to suggest ways to practise. Something tells me if they're taking that long to learn something they're not being economic....

Although she was concerned about the match between her teaching and the realities of

professional possibilities, she was not at this stage exploring a wide range of strategies, but remained within a focused structure of apprenticeship. This was also evident in her conceptualisation of the relationship in musical development between assimilating ideas of style and performance practice and the process of developing one's own individual ideas:

Sally: no, so I think there are benefits to listening and try to encourage them to listen to lots of recordings, not just get used to one, so they have a balanced view. Certainly the ones I have, they're not mature enough or anything to form their own, they still need to listen to learn from music before they can say, "I'll find my own ideas." They need the vocabulary, the reference...

The concept of a hierarchy of musical development, with the process of forming one's own ideas as the pinnacle of maturity was shared by Amanda, David and Brian, and also to some extent by Lawrence. It also extended seamlessly into the concept of a hierarchy of talent and success, which seemed to pervade the school and be difficult to get away from, particularly as achievement in performance was the key benchmark of assessment:

Sally: ... poor things... some of them have worked so hard and will never go beyond a 54%... no matter how hard they work.

HG: why do you say that?

Sally: well, maybe that's not true. Maybe they can turn around. Well there are some who are more talented than others, innately talented. If someone's not so talented they can do a lot, they can turn themselves around, they can really achieve, but they can't be that talented as the person who's come in just like that. It's always going to be reflected in marks and things because basically when we listen to performances we're always listening for something else, something outstandingly talented. I find it quite hard to deal with here.

As she perceived it, a cloud of failure seemed to hang over those students who were

deemed to be less talented from the start in that they could never hope to become something more than mediocre. This in turn became intertwined with a feeling of fear in the students, fear of where in the pecking order of performance achievement they might be judged to be:

Sally: Well most of them are quite tense. So first of all, postures, I try and get them to try and sit up...they slump down. It takes quite a long time....they say it's a foetal position. When you're scared and everything.... I'm not sure that's true.... the two go together... when you're feeling confident you can sit like this... when you're not you can see them shrinking. So I try to explain to them that if they sit like this, they might never feel they want to shrink. It'll work that way round.

From this perspective, a conservatoire was a dead end for these students:

Sally: I think it is hard for people who come here who are not especially gifted.... For confidence levels...they're not stupid, they can see that they're not as good and A, B and C, D, F and G... and they still have to get up and play next to them.... so I think a lot of our lessons deal with that as well.... To build them up enough to be confident enough to actually get up and play.

### ***Sally - the one-to-one relationship***

Sally's current suggestion to improve students' work was to use fear as a motivating force. This reflected what she saw as more common practice within her discipline, and perhaps conservatoires in general, although she was clearly uneasy about this in herself:

Sally: because I'm trying to treat them as equal, except I'm older, more experienced. So there is this distance anyway, but I notice with other people that there's more distance and I think that's helpful.

HG: in what way would it be helpful?

Sally: well they're more fearful.... So they work harder... but in a way I sort of think they should be working for themselves anyway, but maybe that's presuming too much of them. Why am I thinking that they should work anyway? They shouldn't be

frightened into working, but that's an ideal thing.

It was difficult for her to think beyond this framework, and to come up with alternative strategies. She had tried asking the students not to come for a lesson until they were prepared, but suggested that this did not have good results:

HG: so you might say, "I want you to have learnt this by memory, ..."

Sally: yes, and say, "don't come for a lesson unless you've done that." But there are some very difficult ones where they then don't come... and so then if they don't come because they haven't managed to do it, then how constructive is that, do you see what I mean? Then I just let them come whatever...I don't know.

Here she seemed to be torn between a sense of responsibility for the students, wanting to use the one-to-one sessions as a place in which to work through difficulties in learning and motivation, and making baseline demands which students needed to meet before making the one-to-one interaction worthwhile. The perpetuation of fear as a motivating strategy seemed to be symptomatic of a more traditional teaching approach in this field. Sally's own attempts at thinking through and applying other strategies, finding them not completely successful and then feeling stuck, demonstrated her isolation as a teacher, and the lack of support she had in tackling these fundamental dilemmas.

### ***Sally – the context of one-to-one tuition***

Sally reported that she did not work with her students as a group, although she was planning a regular performance class for the following year. She was quite specific about particular ways of practising which might help in particular pieces of repertoire, but she did not monitor practising other than through a student's progress from lesson to lesson. She was surprised on several counts in terms of her students' lack of motivation:

how little they were able to prepare for a lesson, how many simple mistakes they made, for example misreading rhythms and notes, at this level. This indicated, perhaps, how far removed from her own experience as a developing player these students were. She was not, however, actively engaged in trying to promote her students' development outside of the lessons. For example, she reported that she encouraged her students to attend concerts, but then simply expressed surprised that they tended not to do this much.

### *Summary*

The relationship between Daniel and Sally was characterised by lively and detailed interactions, and high motivation on both sides. This was fuelled, in part at least, by Daniel's involvement in composition, and his considering integrating composition and instrumental playing in his future career. Daniel was clearly comfortable in the relationship, and even in his first year had settled into it quite quickly compared with some of the other students. The warmth shown by Sally, and the lack of a harsh approach suited him, providing an environment where some of his biggest difficulties with physical tension and introversion as a performer could begin to dissolve. With a tougher teacher, or if communication between them had been more difficult, he might well have found the experience less productive.

On the other hand, in relation to other students, Sally expressed concern, both about their professional futures and consequently about her teaching strategies. Where she felt that students were not achieving highly enough, she was considering using a more

authoritarian approach to put them under more pressure to work hard. She felt that students needed to be putting in a substantial amount of work developing themselves as instrumentalists before they could become musically involved in exploring their own ideas. This meant that where this work was not successful, her underlying aims of establishing independence in her students were also difficult to achieve. There was some tension here, therefore, between the aims of developing independence and a satisfactory level of musical and instrumental expertise. Sally was clearly uncertain about how best to support her students. She discussed some possible strategies at length in the interview, and demonstrated that she lacked confidence as a teacher, even though her instrumental knowledge and skill base were extremely strong.

## **Discussion**

In the teacher-student pairs discussed in this chapter, all the teachers and students were highly committed to their work, and appeared to be engaging musically and instrumentally at deep levels. This was particularly evident in the processes of reflection-in-action described in lessons relating to specific repertoire or aspects of technique. The time spent in this type of activity, and the detail covered, were central to Amanda and Sally's work, but were less of a feature of Steve's lessons, which deliberately tended to move through diverse repertoire at a faster pace. He was concerned to establish his students as autonomous musicians, and felt that this approach enabled them to pick up more musical understanding and a feeling for their own particular interests.

The teachers all articulated clear aims in their teaching, although these were different in their points of focus. Amanda's specific vocational aims were supported by her description of her teaching approach which unequivocally followed an apprenticeship model. Steve's aims of facilitating personal development towards independence also seemed to be supported by his teaching. For example, he waited for students to take the initiative in booking lessons, determining what areas of repertoire they worked on, and structuring the lessons. Sally wanted her students to achieve a high level of independence, but at the same time adopted an apprenticeship approach rather like Amanda. Interestingly she was considering whether to be more authoritarian as a teacher. This was a style of teaching which Amanda openly acknowledged.

Amanda's model of apprenticeship resembled the way in which Quist worked in Schon's case study of an architect's studio (Schon 1983). Similar patterns of collaborative reflection-in-action were used, with Amanda overlaying her experience on the student's attempts, demonstrating how she would do things, trying things out with the student, and creating a constant flow of dialogue throughout the process. After each lesson, the student went away to work more on his own, and reconstruct his ideas in the light of what she offered. In cases where there was a good match between teacher and student, for example, between Amanda and David, the interactions generated excitement and a lot of development. David was able to progress, absorb Amanda's strength and vision, but was not overwhelmed by her, and was able to maintain and develop his own identity. In cases where the match was not quite so strong, there did not seem to be much modification of the teaching interactions, other than Amanda being

more prescriptive about what the student was to do in terms of practice, technique and musical interpretation. Where Brian considered his future in more practical detail, he clearly needed to acquire some additional professional skills, and these were not part of the domain of the one-to-one sessions. His relationship with Amanda was not dysfunctional, but it was possibly not drawing out his full potential.

This indicates the importance of wider consideration of the conceptualisation of teaching and learning in higher education, and its possible impact on one-to-one instrumental/vocal teaching. The provision of diverse and rich learning contexts, for example, brings a different perspective from that offered by Schon's apprenticeship, and could have beneficial effects in terms of motivating students and enabling them to find more autonomous ways of engaging with the processes of instrumental/vocal learning.

The students were all extremely appreciative of their current teacher(s), and were more openly critical of previous teachers. This did not vary according to the particular approach of the teacher, but seemed to be a feature of the one-to-one relationship itself. Perhaps it was necessary to the students psychologically, as there was so much invested in this relationship, and they wanted to feel that it was going well. Lawrence and Penny, who had more than one teacher, were positive about all their teachers, but were able to distinguish between their styles and to express some preferences. In some cases there was a sharp divide between the feelings for the current teacher and previous ones. The extremity of this suggested that a certain degree of idealisation and demonisation



characterised the students' perceptions of these relationships.

Furthermore, the students all absorbed and internalised many of the attitudes to learning and the music profession which their teacher(s) presented. For example, the students' perceptions of an effective teacher-student one-to-one relationship and the boundaries around it in terms of social interaction outside of the lesson, exactly mirrored the teachers' perceptions, although for example with Amanda and Steve these were opposite. This suggested that, as yet, these students were reproducing the perceptions of their teachers more than they were developing their own. This also seemed to be the case in relation to perceptions of career development. David and Brian were both focused on careers as high-level performers, whereas Penny and Lawrence were more diverse in their interests and aspirations.

In all of the cases, there was little evidence of reflection-on-action, either in the lessons and through teacher-led activity, or on the part of the students independently. Strategies of feedback were generally narrow: discussion between student and teacher. No one in the groups used audio or video recording, or, for example, a reflective journal as feedback and to stimulate self-evaluation or planning. In general the peer group was not used proactively as a resource for the students. Steve, however, used ensemble work frequently in his teaching and planned this consciously to make the most of peer learning. In contrast, Amanda used the peer group to stimulate learning by using peers as an audience in a performance class without feedback being given. For Brian, this peer group was perceived as quite threatening, only valuable for feedback if he felt he

had performed well in a class.

Although the teachers were all concerned with the individuality of their students, it did not appear that their teaching practices varied in relation to them. Steve described altering the pace of his work to suit the amount each student could absorb, and the content of Amanda's teaching evolved according to the instrumental level of each student, but other than this they tended to work with the same kinds of aims, lesson structures and interpersonal relationships with each student.

These findings concurred with key findings from my own action research with oboe students, particularly in terms of the demonstration in the action research that whilst I wished to adapt to the different needs of individual students, and thought that I was doing to this to a reasonable degree, in fact especially within one-to-one tuition I tended to be rather inflexible as a teacher and to present a similar teaching style with all the students (see p.30). The data from the teacher-student pairs also showed that the students mirrored the opinions of their teachers, and tended to accept their teaching style without question. This reinforced my understanding of the power of the teacher in one-to-one tuition, and consequently the responsibility we hold as teachers to consider the approaches and teaching strategies which we offer, and the kinds of learning which these may stimulate, both in the short and longer terms, and with the professional future of individual students in mind.

From my action research, it became clear that the diversity of the learning environments

presented through the research processes, the elements of peer interaction, and the reflective cycles which were set up through the video recording and review, had an impact on student learning. As a result it seemed that many of the students gained confidence and autonomy in their learning, and their underlying anxiety about their work reduced. It was significant, therefore, that in the teacher-student pairs considered in this chapter, similar aspects of teaching and learning were not considered, and did not seem to form an important part of the one-to-one learning environment. The implications of this in terms of practice and policy need further discussion, and will be considered in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This research has explored conceptualisations of instrumental/vocal teaching in a conservatoire by mapping the perceptions of instrumental/vocal teachers and students in one institution in the UK: the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. The particular questions addressed were:

1. How is the one-to-one relationship in instrumental and vocal tuition in higher education conceptualised?
2. What particular strategies and techniques characterise effective and less effective teaching and learning relationships?

This chapter seeks to summarise the findings in terms of the research questions, to relate them to the literature, and to consider their implications. Key issues are discussed concerning conflicts in one-to-one tuition between, on the one hand, the detailed reflection-in-action and personal interaction which are made possible by individual attention, and on the other hand, the potential for the one-to-one relationship to counteract student responsibility in learning and the development of an autonomous artistic vision. These tensions raise questions about the fundamental purposes of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning in higher education in the twenty-first century (www.musicmanifesto.co.uk; Youth Music, 2002; Hewett, 2003; Schippers, 2004; Renshaw, 2005).

## **Models of apprenticeship**

The findings in this study showed that, in relation to the first research question, most of the teachers conceptualised one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition in terms of transmission or apprenticeship, although they were rarely discussed explicitly. This was consonant with the ways in which one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition in higher education have usually been conceptualised in the literature. However, a number of tensions became evident in the findings relating to the detailed purposes and processes embodied in these conceptualisations of transmission and apprenticeship. For example, whilst reflective practice in one-to-one tuition was often assumed by teachers to be wide-ranging, accounts of actual lessons demonstrated conceptualisations based on a narrower range of reflection-in-action in relation to specific repertoire. This suggested that reflective practice as a whole might be falling short of its potential in some cases, for both students and teachers. Such tensions within the conceptualisations of apprenticeship require further discussion. In order to contextualise this, key issues in the literature relating to apprenticeship will first be reviewed.

The most detailed characterisation of apprenticeship in the literature was articulated in Schon's analysis of training across a number of professional fields, including instrumental learning through a masterclass (1987). Schon's concept of reflection-in-action provided a powerful account of the kinds of interaction which may occur in one-to-one tuition in higher education, but a closer analysis of this reflection-in-action indicated both that the model depended to a large extent on the fit between teacher and student, and that it did not necessarily engage students with their own creative and

reflective processes.

In Schon's accounts, reflection-in-action was charismatic, and could produce immediate progression. However, it was fundamentally teacher-led, dependent on the teachers' ideas, for example of musical interpretation, or of design to fit a particular architectural problem. The creative engagement of the student in these situations was assumed rather than shown. The sustainability of the learning beyond the immediate context of the teacher-student interaction was not considered, and there was little sense of genuine mutual exploration of learning. A complex relationship between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action was assumed to characterise this practice as a whole, but it appeared that aspects of critical reflection-on-action were in fact largely absent from the interactions. In the case of the music masterclass, the equivalent of Schon's own analogy of reflection on which ship to build, and for which purpose, was entirely absent. This showed how apprenticeship of this kind might become inward looking, self-referential and unadventurous.

Reflective practice as a fundamental part of apprenticeship has also been described, for example in the context of an operating theatre (Lyon and Brew, 2003). Here managing educational tasks was coupled with managing the social interaction of the operating theatre. Along with the practical and emotional demands of surgery, it was suggested that this could be stressful. Whilst the operating theatre might be a more extreme environment than a conservatoire, there are parallels in the range of aspects of learning which students need to attend to, including for example the opportunities to work

professionally with their teachers, and the social demands of having to interact with potential future colleagues. Lyon and Brew concluded from their study that the students who reported getting most out of their time in the operating theatre:

...engage in a reflective process, successfully managing their learning in three domains. They 'size-up' the learning milieu noticing the attitude of the staff, the emotional climate, the opportunities for a place at the operating table, and they use various strategies or interventions to maximise the learning outcomes (2003: 65).

These reflective skills were more wide-ranging and creatively demanding of the student than those described by Schon in the music masterclass, and were, as Lyon and Brew suggested, closer to the skills of lifelong learning than to the skills required, for example, for learning in a lecture hall. They were, therefore, considered extremely valuable, although little was said about how to facilitate such an approach to learning.

Creative reflective and lifelong learning skills were developed in this medical context, perhaps because autonomy was demanded of the students, and those most able to meet this challenge were the most successful. Paradoxically, although it was often difficult for the senior surgeons to attend to the students' needs in the context of the operating theatre, this learning environment began to show the ways in which reflective practice of a teacher might be usefully intertwined with the reflective practice of students. This relationship between the reflective practice of teachers and students has been described more directly in the context of teacher education:

....I perceived my learning to be intertwined with my students' learning. They were teaching me how to be a teacher educator by expressing what they needed to learn as young professionals. It was critical that I listen carefully and that I continuously adapt my teaching (Mueller, 2003: 71).

Mutuality in the teacher-student relationship has rarely been mentioned in the literature

on instrumental/vocal tuition, and was only a key theme in Gholson's study of Dorothy Delay's violin teaching (Gholson, 1998). She characterised one-to-one tuition as conversational and described the mutual benefits derived from it. However in this context it was not clear how much the benefits for Delay were of learning in the context of one-to-one tuition, and how much the benefits related to other issues such as professional validation from student successes, or psychological benefits arising from having dependent students. Nevertheless, the concept of mutual learning opened up the potential within instrumental/vocal tuition (including one-to-one lessons) of a collaborative learning/research environment, encompassing both teachers and students in similar enterprises based in professional contexts. This was found to be an environment where the teacher could legitimately develop on his/her own terms, not simply through nurturing a student or bathing in the reflected glory of their successes.<sup>1</sup>

Viewed from this perspective, Schon's framework of apprenticeship in instrumental/vocal teaching and learning contrasted with more recent conceptualisations of effective practice in higher education as a whole, where the focus has tended to shift more towards student learning, deep engagement in the learning processes, and the provision, therefore, of rich learning contexts, and active interaction with other students and teachers to support the construction of learning. The evidence from the literature suggested that in music, apprenticeship has tended to be put into practice within a relatively narrow framework, not necessarily promoting autonomy and the development

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<sup>1</sup> The significance of a teacher's holistic well-being (encompassing mind, body and spirit) as a key foundation to effective interactions in teaching and learning which empower students has also been identified more generally (Hooks, B. (1994), Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom, London, Routledge.)



of an individual artistic voice amongst students.

The data collected in this study revealed that both teachers and students reported a preponderance of reflection-in-action in lessons. This could generate excitement and lead to immediate results. The interactions were often inspiring, with the teacher able to demonstrate technical and musical points charismatically, and this boosted confidence for many students. On the surface at least, this was a fast and effective form of teaching and learning. Much seemed to resemble the reflection-in-action which Schon described in the piano masterclass and the architect's studio. Similarly, the creative process was often led by the teacher, and where the student was able to engage in this, it was usually on the teacher's terms. Autonomy in the student was not always stimulated, even though this was an aspiration of many of the teachers, and the links made between teacher-student interactions and professional contexts were often limited.

Furthermore reflection-on-action looking at the broader issues of the cultural impact of music, and consequent questions about contexts of music-making, and the creative engagement, collaborative processes and leadership required, was not a common feature of lessons. In the majority of cases, it was not encouraged either through teacher modelling or through discussion of students' work outside the one-to-one lesson. The patterning of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action was constrained and fell short of its potential. Most of the teachers adopted a conception of apprenticeship similar to Schon's, and considered it effective, but student potential did not seem to be being fulfilled as effectively as thought in some cases.

## **Teaching and learning strategies**

This study revealed that, in relation to the second research question concerning the strategies which characterise effective and less effective teaching and learning relationships, a wide range of techniques were used by different teachers to stimulate musical development, technical skill and metacognitive learning. Although each teacher tended to focus on a few techniques and strategies, the students all reported finding the approaches of their current teacher(s) effective. However, they also indicated that the process of engaging with the different approaches of different teachers encouraged them to be more autonomous as learners. Aspects of reflective practice such as feedback, keeping records, and planning were not a high priority for most of the teachers and students, and compared with practice in other areas of higher education, these tended only to be undertaken on an informal basis.

### ***Strategies and structures used in one-to-one lessons***

The teaching techniques and strategies which were articulated by the twenty teachers, constituted a rich resource when considered as a whole. However, most individual teachers relied on only a few ideas. They emphasised the need to respond differently to each student's needs, but their reports of actual lessons suggested that in fact students tended to be treated in similar ways. Furthermore, the lesson structures used were common to nearly all the teachers. Such a uniform structure may have been designed to facilitate spontaneity in the detail of the reflection-in-action, but may also have arisen

from a pervading habit, attributable to tradition more than a specific teaching need. This highlighted a need for professional development for teachers, and opportunities to engage in critical reflection on the fundamental aspects of one-to-one tuition.

There were different emphases in terms of teachers' primary focus on technique, music, and learning processes. Although students were not experiencing all these styles of teaching, but only the one adopted by their current teacher, they were universally appreciative of this current teacher's approach. The finding that all of the students were satisfied in this way suggested that all of the teaching styles could be equally successful. This was perhaps to be expected given that, for the most part, the students were highly motivated. Furthermore, those students who had several teachers appreciated their differences, and reported that the diversity encouraged them to become more autonomous as learners. On the other hand, only one teacher indicated that it was not necessarily a good idea for students to stay with a single teacher for a long period of time. Perhaps in this culture where students could easily become dependent on their teachers, the teachers could become emotionally dependent on the student, and in this respect there was real mutuality. The implications of emotional dependency on both sides are far-reaching in terms of facilitating student learning, teacher involvement in assessment procedures, and the significance of student successes and failures. Similar issues have been raised in the field of PhD supervision (Salmon, 1992), where dependency in the one-to-one relationship was found to be common but not necessarily effective in stimulating student learning.

### *Feedback, keeping records, and planning as part of reflective practice*

Feedback was an aspect of learning which was not discussed in the interviews in any detail, although the strength of its impact was clear. Few teachers, for example, discussed giving positive feedback and encouragement to students, yet a significant number of students talked about nearly giving up and leaving the Guildhall School, feeling that they were not able to do what was asked of them, or were not sufficiently successful in preparing to be professional musicians.

Generally there was little consideration by either students or teachers of, for example, the balance of reinforcing and critical comments, the use of peer feedback, video and audio recording, self-reflective notes or journals, or summing up in lessons. This again underlined the need for opportunities for professional development for teachers. Few teachers reported using audio or video recording in their lessons. While some suggested that their students might benefit from recording in the lead-up to important performances, or as a regular part of practising, others raised objections to recording on the grounds that it gave inappropriate feedback to students. In many cases attitudes to the use of these teaching resources seemed to stem first and foremost from a lack of familiarity with the technology, and difficulty in gaining access to equipment.

Almost no teachers kept substantial records of their own planning in teaching or of students' progress. Reflective practice was dependent on memory, with short notes or repertoire lists as an aide memoir. One-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition is probably one of the few disciplines in higher education where record keeping is not obligatory, a

required part of working as a professional in education. The lack of records makes accountability for the quality of the teaching difficult to build into the culture. Problems in the teaching relationship are difficult to identify and address, and this perhaps accentuates the divide between instances where a good match is found between student and teacher, and where there are difficulties.

### **The impact of the one-to-one relationship on learning**

This study showed that the one-to-one relationship itself had an important impact on learning processes. One-to-one tuition has often been considered in the literature to provide the most effective learning environment. In this research the one-to-one relationship was highly valued by both teachers and students, but it did not always seem to have an unequivocally positive impact on learning. This raised questions about the contemporary value of a conceptualisation of instrumental/vocal tuition in a conservatoire premised centrally on apprenticeship through one-to-one tuition.

### ***The culture of anxiety***

An important issue to emerge from the interviews was the culture of anxiety and fear of failure which underpinned many experiences of learning. This resonated with findings from the literature which suggested that anxiety may be present at different stages of the learning process and often has a significant impact on performance outcomes (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; Trigwell, 2005). Anxiety was not often directly discussed in this study, but was evident beneath the surface, perhaps not something to

which students or teachers wanted to refer. The strength of these underlying feelings was surprising since all the students were engaged in one-to-one tuition. The level of individual attention and support available in one-to-one tuition was generally considered by the students and teachers to nurture the individuality of students, and to help them to build self-confidence and a positive approach, allowing for personalised learning. Indeed, this was a universal declared intention amongst the teachers, and seemed also to characterise the model of proximal apprenticeship and mentoring described by Gholson (1998) and by Schon (1983; 1987). However, it emerged that the one-to-one teacher-student relationship was itself a complex and important factor in the learning process, and one which could potentially inhibit learning, and even perpetuate underlying anxieties. Perhaps in fact, some of the key characteristics which have been identified in student support (Crosling and Webb, 2000) such as rapport, trust, and communication were relatively easy to achieve in this context, but others such as objectivity or empowerment of the student through developing intrinsic (rather than quick-fix) confidence and sustained, autonomous motivation, were more difficult to ensure. Many of the teachers reported having difficulties with students, particularly when it appeared that a learning block had been reached, and in some cases students were highly critical of previous teachers. This resonated with the literature relating to one-to-one PhD supervision which drew attention to some of the difficulties inherent in one-to-one tutoring, particularly in relation to the dynamics of power in the relationship, and the negotiation of expectations of student dependency and autonomy in the processes of learning.

### *Trust and power in one-to-one tuition*

The teachers characterised the one-to-one relationship in different ways: as parental, friendly, or collaborative. For all of them trust was an important feature, and this was expressed particularly in terms of the trust which a student had for the teacher. The mutuality of the trust necessary for an effective relationship to develop was only discussed by a few teachers and students. However, alongside the concept of trust, it was clear that teachers wielded considerable power over their students, through the intimacy of the one-to-one relationship and the students' investment in this for their learning, through their positions in the Guildhall School sitting on assessment boards, and in the music profession where they could assist students in finding professional work. These aspects of power in the relationship remained implicit for the most part, and were not openly discussed or acknowledged by the teachers. However, there was potential for this power to conflict with the trust necessary for the one-to-one relationship to flourish, and perhaps for this to contribute to any underlying anxiety which students might experience.

The power of the teacher, and the tendency to look predominantly for trust on the part of the student, also highlighted questions about the nature of the reflective practice in lessons. To what degree was this really mutual, an exploration of ideas in which both teacher and student were creatively engaged and able to experiment? To what degree was it ultimately teacher-led, aiming for transmission of particular musical ideas, induction into particular ways of thinking, leaving students to make what they could of it? The case studies of teacher-student pairs suggested that quite different kinds of

reflective practice could characterise lessons, depending on the approach of the teacher, the student, and the teacher-student match.

### ***Idealisation and criticism of teachers***

All of the students interviewed suggested that they were extremely content with their current teacher(s). Being a student in a one-to-one teacher-student relationship clearly involved emotional investment, and consequently perhaps some fear of being openly critical of the teacher, and possible repercussions of doing so. In many cases students idealised a current teacher as part of the process of entrusting themselves to their care. This was less true of previous teachers about whom students tended to be more critical. In contrast, the teachers were less inclined to be critical of their own previous teachers, and they focused on expressing their gratitude and sense of respect. Negative comments were relatively few and rather veiled.

The reasons for these differences were not clear. Perhaps as students these teachers had only experienced productive one-to-one student-teacher relationships, or having become successful in their own right, they may have been inclined to view their teachers in a generous light. The passage of time may have emphasised the positive memories over the less positive ones. The teachers may have been conscious of the potential dangers of criticising their own previous teachers in a semi-public context, although anonymity was guaranteed in the dissemination of the data. The veiled comments together with the willingness of students to be more critical of previous teachers suggested that there may have been implicit criticism here, inhibited by a feeling that this should not be



expressed. The purpose of suppressing such criticism was not evident, but it seemed to be a significant feature of the culture of instrumental/vocal teaching, where teachers had become socialised into the profession rather than feeling able openly to articulate their individual voices.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Social interaction and the match between teacher and student perspectives***

Another aspect of the power invested in teachers related to differences between perceptions of appropriate social interaction. Some teachers felt that, for example, going for a drink in the pub was an essential part of an effective teacher-student relationship. Others rejected this, and were careful not to interact on a social basis with their students. These differences seemed to be largely dictated by teachers, and students' opinions of what was appropriate tended to mirror the opinions of the teachers.<sup>3</sup>

The students' opinions also tended to mirror the opinions and attitudes of their teachers in relation to other aspects of the relationship. This was particularly clear in the case studies where Amanda and Steve held radically different ideas about the fundamental aims of instrumental teaching, which were each replicated by their students. There

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<sup>2</sup> The limiting potential of such socialisation has also been articulated in the strategic and operational plan for the Guildhall School: "Above all, we need to move away from the notion of a conservatoire as a nursery or hothouse and develop a distinctive role as workshop or laboratory. The Guildhall School should be a place where the most talented young professionals from around the world come to develop their skills, and a place to which established practitioners come to share their expertise, experiment and re-energise. If the School can act as a centre for the circulation of artistic energy in this way, we will have realised our potential for distinctive excellence" (Ife, B. (2005), Planning for peak performance: strategic and operational plan 2005-2010, London, Guildhall School of Music & Drama: 5).

<sup>3</sup> In the context of schools in the UK, issues of health and safety now require that one-to-one interactions can be observed from outside the studio. Such rules acknowledge the potential dangers of the one-of-one relationship, but hardly tackle the underlying issues of power and influence which come into play.

seemed to be some loss of an individual voice on the part of the students.<sup>4</sup>

In the short term, for the students, relinquishing some degree of individual identity may have been attractive and have reduced anxiety, but this was unlikely to be a productive long-term solution.<sup>5</sup> For instance, in the case of Brian and Amanda, there was tension between the confidence gained through one-to-one tuition, and Brian's underlying anxiety when he had to perform on his own. Amanda's solution was simply that he needed to perform frequently until the problem was resolved. Although Brian considered that he was getting a great deal of support from his lessons with Amanda, this did not seem to be facilitating the transformation of his anxiety. The evidence of both Amanda and Steve about their own development as confident professional musicians supported this idea. They indicated that it was in fact the moments of getting away from music college and from the one-to-one tuition which facilitated growing confidence and professional progression. It seemed that whilst at a conservatoire engaged in one-to-one tuition they were caught in a culture of dependency. Although

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<sup>4</sup> There is evident tension between this finding and the vision articulated in the School's strategic plan: "The Guildhall School trains and educates the most talented students from around the world to enable them to succeed in their chosen profession at the highest level. We need to give students the technique and craft skills necessary to practise, and they need to be technically proficient; but they also need to develop their intellectual faculties to become critically acute 'intelligent practitioners'. The Guildhall School does more than simply teach people to act or to play; we have to help students /find their voice"" (Ife, B. (2005). *Planning for peak performance: strategic and operational plan 2005-2010*, London, Guildhall School of Music & Drama: 5).

<sup>5</sup> In the previous action research on breathing and oboe playing, it was clear both that students did in fact invest a lot of power in me as their teacher, and that there was some mirroring of what they considered to be my own opinions about their playing and needs. However, what actually helped them to begin to reduce their own anxieties about playing seemed to relate most to the processes in the research which extended from the traditional pattern of one-to-one tuition, such as reviewing the video recordings of their own performances, and engaging with diverse input from different experts. It was through these experiences that they were able to become more aware of their own learning processes and to take responsibility for them. The action research also revealed that the more detailed work in one-to-one lessons was not so easy a context in which to promote these skills and attitudes to learning. Whilst it was possible to give an immediate confidence boost to students, this was not something which was really dealing with the anxiety in the longer term and promoting more fundamental self-confidence in them.

teachers might talk about fostering autonomy and responsibility for learning, in reality the students' learning was conducted within constraining parameters.

Many teachers described having difficulties with some students, feeling either that they were not progressing sufficiently well, or that their personalities or learning styles did not match. The fit between approaches of each teacher and student was significant in determining to what degree difficulties might be encountered. Sometimes the relationship was working well and enabling more personalised learning. In other cases where it was not working so well, one-to-one tuition magnified barriers to learning. Most importantly, many of the teachers found it hard to be flexible and adopt different approaches to suit the students even though they were aware of these different needs.

### ***One-to-one tuition in relation to the curriculum***

In almost all cases, the teachers knew little about the rest of the curriculum which students followed, or indeed about their practising techniques and structures, and they were rarely proactively engaged in trying to make one-to-one tuition part of a broader, integrated learning environment. The exception to this was that the teachers were often involved in formal assessment procedures, and tended to know about the external competitions and performances which their students were undertaking. In most cases the one-to-one lesson operated in an isolated frame, with little connection to other contexts of learning. This served to intensify the relationship and so accentuate its potentially destructive effects as well as its benefits. The isolation of one-to-one tuition presented an enormous limitation in terms of maximising the potential of the resources

available in the Guildhall School, and the possibilities of integrated and personalised learning paths through the curriculum. Such isolation contributed to a very limited perspective on learning and its interconnections with the music profession.

### ***Group work***

Many of the teachers interviewed articulated the value of group learning, although relatively few were actively engaged in group sessions with their students. For those who were, the emphasis was usually on creating a situation where students could practise performing for their peers. The group provided an audience, and in some cases student feedback was sought. However, this was not the prime focus, and the interaction and sharing of experience was perceived more as a by-product than a primary aim in these classes. The students interviewed were mixed in their responses to group work. Some found their peer group supportive and beneficial, others learned from having to perform to their peers but were nevertheless anxious about it. Very few considered their peer group to offer a rich resource in terms of learning possibilities. However, collaborative learning has been identified in the literature as an important component in rich learning contexts (Biggs, 1999; Ramsden, 2003). In the context of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning in a conservatoire, such collaborative learning could provide an important environment for reflection-on-action, which would help in articulating and debating different critical perspectives, and in developing shared creative engagement. This could contribute to a conceptualisation of instrumental/vocal tuition which would evolve from a broader understanding of reflective practice than that described in Schon's piano masterclass. The potential for peer learning in

instrumental/vocal learning, and its integration with one-to-one tuition, therefore needs to be researched further.

### **The fundamental purposes of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning in higher education**

The evidence in this study of tensions and connections between autonomy in learning, reflective practice, anxiety, creative engagement in diverse contexts, and the one-to-one relationship in instrumental/vocal tuition, suggests that the fundamental purposes of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning in higher education, and the fit between these and the ways in which tuition is conceptualised by teachers and students in a conservatoire, need to be considered. It was not clear that the predominant models of teaching and learning through transmission and apprenticeship expressed in this study could stimulate the most appropriate and extensive learning in all the students, nor that they encouraged teachers to develop techniques and strategies to match individual student needs, and to prepare students for professional music in the twenty-first century.

In terms of educational purpose, the conceptualisations which were articulated by the teachers and students tended to have a narrow focus, assuming, for example, that until a high level of technical and musical accomplishment was achieved, it was not possible to engage in more individual expression and interpretation. In this way the creative ownership of repertoire, for example, was limited to the most advanced students. The teachers' and students' reports of the interactions themselves also tended to indicate that

apprenticeship was dominated by the teacher, and it could be difficult for the student to be creatively engaged in either reflection-in-action or reflection-on-action. Such a conceptualisation is not aligned with more contemporary models of higher education such as those proposed by Biggs or Ramsden, or indeed with a model of apprenticeship such as the one defined by Keller and Keller (1996), which identified creative engagement in the process as key.<sup>6</sup> In the context of a different craft skill, blacksmithing, Keller and Keller (1996) argued that through apprenticeship the skill base could be interlaced with conceptual knowledge, including an understanding of the cultural places and purposes of the products, the two being part of an ongoing creative process. This created a symbiotic relationship between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, and established reflective practice as a creative as well as re-creative process, maintaining apprenticeship within an outward-looking framework, unlikely to become overly self-referential and therefore stagnant.

The conceptualisations of Keller and Keller and Biggs also resonate with, for example, Bruner's distinction between analytic and intuitive thinking, and the significance in human and cultural terms of the latter:

Intuitive thinking, the training of hunches, is a much-neglected and essential feature of productive thinking, not only in formal academic disciplines but also in everyday life. The shrewd guess, the fertile hypothesis, the courageous leap to a tentative conclusion – these are all the most valuable coin of the thinker at work, whatever his line of work (1977: 13-14).

Bruner underlined the need for both rigour and an intuitive process in reflection-in-

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<sup>6</sup> As Biggs suggested, an approach based on the transmission of knowledge/skill is unlikely to hinder the most talented students, yet could well accentuate the divide between them and seemingly less talented ones (Biggs, J. (1999), Teaching for Quality Learning at University, OU Press.).

action and reflection-on-action, which could allow for leaps of imagination and give them appropriate support. Translating these ideas into the field of instrumental/vocal tuition in a conservatoire, the importance of nurturing the individual, intuitive voice alongside craft skills becomes clearer (Hooks, 1994), together with the creative engagement of the individual in relevant contexts of music-making, which might encompass diverse practices (from performing to listening, composing to researching, leading to teaching and learning), and locations (local, national and international). This would have significant implications for the conceptualisation and delivery of the education offered to conservatoire students, and the outcomes desired both in immediate terms (preparation for the music profession) and in the broader terms of lifelong personal development and potential to contribute to society.

***One-to-one tuition, and its relationship to the culture of the classical music profession***

Alongside the issues of educational purpose, there are also ways in which features of one-to-one instrumental/vocal tuition identified in this study may reflect and interconnect with wider issues of classical music and its place within the diverse cultures of the twenty-first century. For example, the finding that one-to-one tuition may make self-responsibility and autonomy in learning more difficult, and may encourage a more lazy and narrow pattern of engagement with learning, has important implications for the underlying confidence, adaptability, creativity and professional initiative of future musicians.

The imperative for classical musicians to be increasingly multi-skilled, creative and entrepreneurial if they are to sustain a professional career, has been stressed recently ([www.musicmanifesto.co.uk](http://www.musicmanifesto.co.uk); Youth Music, 2002). Yet within the music business, as the demand for live classical music dwindles, there is an increasing public fascination with a few individuals, who have extraordinary technical facility, an ability to produce, as David suggested in his interview, flawless performances under almost any circumstances, and also have a marketable physical image. This situation, fuelled by the recording industry (Lowson, 2003; Davis, 2004), has perhaps emphasised the value of narrower channels of musical development, successfully delivering ever-increasing standards of technical impeccability (even in preference to musical expression), and the cult of the personality over musical integrity.

Such channels may well sit comfortably with the dynamics and structure of one-to-one tuition as they emerged in many cases in this study, characterised by the themes of the need for flawless performances, professional vocation without engaging creatively in diverse professional possibilities, students' dependency on the one-to-one teacher, the perception of a successful few rising to great professional heights in contrast to failure in many others, and the paucity of critical reflection on learning or its purposes. However these channels also seem to be disengaged from the huge contemporary cultural changes in the wider field of musical engagement now evident in the UK, and to be disempowering for many musicians who now face the challenges to engage professionally in ways which are culturally meaningful, creative and sustainable. A question which is therefore stimulated by these findings is whether there may be a



connection between the tensions and problematic characteristics identified in instrumental/vocal tuition and the increasingly stagnating classical music market (Lowson, 2003), where in the workforce as a whole individual voices are often buried, and musicians are not able to respond sufficiently to the challenges of the changing cultural landscape?

From this perspective one-to-one tuition as vocational apprenticeship appears to represent a comfortable and self-replicating model with familiar outcomes, but where creative tension is minimal, and students develop insufficient autonomy and confidence to respond to the changes in cultural and economic demands. In action, this model produces some successes, but also considerable perception of failure. Furthermore, as the findings from the teachers' interviews showed, those performers who became successful soloists achieved this by asserting themselves over their teachers, by leaving one-to-one tuition, and by deciding to be responsible for their own development. Arguably they would have found their independence and artistic voice in almost any environment, but in a more diversely stimulating environment might have found these qualities sooner. The implication of this is clear. Creative engagement and autonomy are necessary for stimulating sustained and continuously developing artistic achievement.

### *The potential of reflective and reflexive cycles*

The processes involved in this research study demonstrated the significance of reflective and reflexive cycles embedded within the artistic and creative engagement of

instrumental/vocal teaching, learning and performance. These were much less evident, however, within the data itself from the main study, and the contrast served to highlight further some of the tensions which were evident between the perceptions expressed about teaching and learning and what seemed to be some of the learning outcomes. The contrast also began to indicate the potential perhaps of such reflective and reflexive cycles to stimulate the kinds of approaches to learning which were perceived by many of the teachers and students in the interviews to be desirable, such as self-responsibility, intrinsic motivation and confidence.

Within the preliminary action research it became evident that many of the participant students gained self-awareness and confidence through the research. The findings suggested that the objectivity of the feedback provided by the results from the laboratory testing, the opportunities for peer feedback, and the experience of reviewing video recordings and comparing their own critical appraisal of their performances with the evidence of the video recordings, stimulated more detailed understanding and greater ownership of their abilities as musicians and needs as learners. These changes also appeared to be associated with reduced levels of anxiety in relation to learning.

From my own point of view in the action research, reflecting reflexively on my teaching brought to light some considerable limitations in my work, and an awareness of gaps between what I wanted to do, what I thought I was doing, and what I actually did, particularly for example in terms of making the one-to-one environment student-centred, or in adapting flexibly to different student needs. However, although reflexive

reflection was painful at times, it also brought the confidence to change, and to experiment with my teaching, to be willing to draw on other expertise, to work with oboe students in groups drawing on the potential of peer interaction and support, to discuss my teaching with others, and to value and learn more from opportunities to teach alongside other colleagues.

Within the main part of this study, it was striking from the interviews with teachers and students that there was little evidence of ongoing cycles of systematic and reflexive cycles embedded within the creative and artistic engagement of one-to-one tuition. In rare exceptions, the benefits of such cycles in terms particularly of self-responsibility, confidence and autonomy in learning were evident. However, many of the participants seemed to be locked into intense cycles of reflection-in-action, highly focused on particular instrumental/vocal techniques and musical skills. These were not balanced by systematic or cyclical processes of reflection-on-action which adopted broader perspectives and incorporated longer-term issues, engaging creatively with questions to mirror Schon's engineering problem of "which ship to build?", such as which kinds of music to play, for which reasons, when and how; or similarly, which kinds of ensembles to participate in, which teaching and learning processes to explore, and which technical, musical and learning skills to focus on? The intense focus on reflection-in-action in one-to-one tuition seemed to contribute to some of the tensions which emerged in student learning between the acquisition of instrumental and musical skill and flexible engagement with professional contexts, or between confidence, self-responsibility, musical autonomy, sustained motivation and dependence on a teacher in learning.

In contrast, the process of analysing the teacher and student interviews generated a recursive reflective cycle as themes emerged, were confirmed or challenged by the data in other transcripts, and as I questioned the emerging themes and grappled reflexively with the task of understanding my own perceptions and preconceptions about the data, and the ways in which these coloured the objectivity of my interpretation of participants' perceptions. This process required a symbiotic relationship between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action in engaging with the data, and demanded that, in working towards the final analysis, I should negotiate continuously the tensions between my perceptions as a researcher/teacher and the perceptions of the participants. Yet it was also a process which was productive, in that it enabled some of the complexities and tensions between the aspirations, perceived processes and outcomes of one-to-one tuition to be illuminated<sup>7</sup>.

In reflecting these different dimensions of the research process and its findings together, the significance of reflective and reflexive cycles embedded within instrumental/vocal teaching and learning practices were emphasised. Not only could they illuminate the complexities and some of the dilemmas of these practices, but they also seemed to have the potential to play an important role in addressing some of the dilemmas, particularly relating to the realisation in practice of stimulating both students' empowerment, confidence, self-responsibility and autonomy in learning, and teachers' awareness,

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<sup>7</sup> It is also important to acknowledge that there could well be differences between teacher and student accounts of one-to-one tuition and observational data which might be gathered from lesson interactions, as this has been shown to be the case in relation to teachers' perceptions and actions in other educational contexts (Pratt, D. D. (1992), "Conceptions of teaching", *Adult Education Quarterly* 42(4): 203-220.)

communication, flexibility and confidence to develop as teachers. In this respect the study began to show the potential of such reflective and reflexive cycles both in terms of the learning environments which may be presented to students, and in terms of initiating and structuring professional development for instrumental/vocal teachers in a conservatoire, in a way which is consonant with the kinds of reflective processes proposed for professional development in other areas of Higher Education (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999; Crosling and Webb, 2000).

### ***Professional education in the twenty-first century***

This analysis suggests that a more ecological view of instrumental and vocal teaching and learning needs to be considered, ecological in terms of the multiple factors in learning which it embraces, including presage, process and product (Biggs and Moore, 1993), and their interdependencies. From the findings it seems that four key aims should underpin the model: stimulating responsibility and autonomy in learning through creative engagement in the symbiotic relationship between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action; facilitating personalised learning by supporting individual pathways in response to existing skills, interests, needs and professional aspirations; developing collaborative learning within professional contexts (local, national, and international); and enabling the exploration of diverse and new artistic contexts.

In this way the focus on the transmission of particular skills and knowledge about music could evolve to encompass a more open and dynamic framework, able to respond to individual needs. This would take into account students' existing abilities and learning

experiences, the potential and interconnections between a range of learning environments and processes (such as the relationship between peer learning and one-to-one teacher-student interactions, the significance of developing understanding of the music played through stylistic and structural knowledge alongside developing the ability to play the music, and the interconnections between professional contexts and the practicum of a conservatoire), and the potential for diverse outcomes, including different careers within performing, teaching, composing, leading, and the development of lifelong learning skills characterised by creative reflective practice and long-term career development.<sup>8</sup>

Such a framework would embody a mutual learning culture, a laboratory of artistic and educational research for students and teachers alike. Leaving aside more traditional conceptions of master and pupil, the teacher would have a role in enabling the student to develop, in facilitating quality collaborative interaction between peers, in generating diverse rich learning contexts embedded in the professional world, and in being a partner in reflective practice and learning. This would involve a fundamental shift in the cultural perspectives of conservatoires, and indeed of many arts organisations, which might be difficult to realise in practice. It would require the transformation of the anxiety underpinning learning amongst instrumental/vocal teachers and students, and the transformation of the fear of what might be lost in relinquishing the exclusivity of one-to-one tuition.

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<sup>8</sup> This kind of approach was cogently argued within the context of novice teachers (Wideen, M., Mayer-Smith, J. et al. (1998), "A critical analysis of the research on learning to teach: making the case for an ecological perspective on inquiry", *Review of Educational Research* 68(2): 130-178). It was also critical to the conception of a portfolio career in *Youth Music*, (2002) *Creating a Land With Music: the Work, Education and Training of Professional Musicians in the 21st Century*, London, Youth Music.

## **Limitations**

### *Size of the study*

A total of forty interviews were undertaken with teachers and students. This constituted a small sample size. The limitations of resources for this study, and the amount of data which could practically be analysed, precluded a larger sample. Although teachers and students were interviewed across instrumental and vocal departments and undergraduate and postgraduate year groups, the small sample size means that generalisations made in this final discussion towards a wider population of instrumental and vocal teachers and students in conservatoires, need to be cautious, and the implications can only be presented tentatively. The generalisations are made since there is no reason to suppose that this particular sample would be substantially different from samples similarly chosen in other conservatoires in the UK, and because the general trends of the findings have mirrored those in the little existing research there is relating to one-to-one research supervision in higher education.

The interview data explored the perceptions of teachers and students, and was not able to relate these to actual interactions in lessons. Observations of the teacher-student pairs would have brought other important dimensions into the analysis, but were beyond the resources of this study. No principal study composition teachers or students were included in the interviews. Access to composition teachers in the conservatoires was problematic at the time of this study, and this resulted in the omission of important perspectives on the key research issues. Further research of this kind should consider the inclusion of composition teachers and students.

### *Selection of participants*

The selection of both teachers and students for interview was not random. The five teachers interviewed initially were all relatively well known to me and I considered that they would be well-disposed towards the research and would be trusting of the interview process. The decision to begin in this way was a strategic one, given that research of this kind was new to the college, and there was likely to be considerable scepticism and resistance to it unless the process was handled with sensitivity and a gradual accumulation of trust and interest. The remaining fifteen teachers interviewed were all suggested by the initial five, being people who they thought would be willing to be interviewed, would have clear ideas to articulate but would not all necessarily have similar views. This may have biased the findings.

The students interviewed were selected from a pool suggested by the teachers interviewed. This means of selection ensured that teacher-student pairs could be compared, and avoided fuelling teacher sensitivities by appearing to approach students without their knowledge. The teachers were not, however, informed about which students from the list they had suggested were in fact interviewed. It was unlikely that any teacher would suggest a student with whom they were experiencing particular difficulties, and indeed no teacher suggested a student who had changed teacher in unhappy circumstances. This was a limitation in that the students were more likely to be positive about their teachers. However, although the students were appreciative of their teachers, the findings nevertheless showed that there were ways in which the one-to-one



tuition seemed, in some cases, to be inhibiting aspects of learning.

### *Subjectivity in the research processes*

Bias in my approach as a researcher was inevitable, and was exacerbated by the research being undertaken in the conservatoire in which I was currently a teacher. This was a limitation. However, the interviews with teachers and students could have been difficult to arrange in a different institution. It was unlikely that another institution would have agreed to allow a teacher from a rival conservatoire to interview teachers and students in this kind of detail about one-to-one tuition, and the teachers and students themselves might have been resistant too. Although the bias of my own perspective as a teacher and insider in the school was a limitation, there were also advantages in that this facilitated the research being undertaken, and meant that the findings could be more easily incorporated into processes of review and development within the school.

In analysing the interview data an iterative process was undertaken to minimise the subjectivity of my own perspective. Participants, however, may have constructed their discourse with an awareness that I was also a member of the senior management team as the deputy head of one of the instrumental departments. It was possible, therefore, that both teachers and students may have been careful of saying anything which might jeopardise their own position as a teacher or student. This may have accounted, for example, for the lack of explicit discussion of the dimensions of power in the teacher-student relationship. However, this limitation perhaps served in fact to strengthen the significance of the implicit tensions around this issue of power in the relationship.

## **Implications for staff development and further research**

This study raised questions about the efficacy of one-to-one tuition as it is structured and implemented in a conservatoire, and highlighted gaps between stated aspirations in teaching and learning and accounts of practice. It has demonstrated potential limitations of the one-to-one student-teacher relationship as well as pinpointing some of its unique characteristics which appear to be critical to the development of instrumental/vocal expertise at the highest levels. In the light of these findings, a number of implications are discussed below, which consider the need for further research into different models of instrumental/vocal learning and the need for professional development for instrumental/vocal teachers.

### ***Professional development***

The need for professional development has been identified both in the field of one-to-one tuition in higher education, and more generally in music education. In the context of PhD supervision, Phillips and Pugh referred to the fact that supervisors have no training in this role (Phillips and Pugh, 2000: 172), although this is now changing in most higher education institutions:

As we are not currently taught how to supervise it is not unrealistic to assume that the next generation of supervisors will treat their PhD students in a similar way to that in which they themselves were treated. Bad supervision breeds bad supervision and research students will continue to feel neglected and depressed.

They suggested that training for supervisors might include discussion groups, input

from participants from different departments, and different institutions where possible.

The imperative to provide music professionals with opportunities to share experience and understanding, and to learn about their students, themselves and the pedagogy of the field has been emphasised in recent years as a key component in the commitment to improve music education for all children (Duke, Flowers et al., 1997; Burwell, 2003). On the other hand, an assumption of shared understanding has also been shown to be an important feature of sustaining and defending existing practices (Pratt, 1992). In the process of a major shift in belief structure (as opposed to refinement of existing beliefs), many difficulties may be experienced, including uncertainty, adversity and resistance. In making a critical analysis of research on learning to teach, Wideen, Mayer-Smith et al. suggested that recent studies which focus on changing the beliefs of beginning teachers may be mistaken in their efforts: "...it seems pointless to seek to change beliefs if evidence supports their enduring quality" (1998: 144). Alternative approaches have favoured the process of building on existing beliefs, rather than trying to change them, and the training of teachers in many instances is now underpinned by sophisticated processes following, for example, theoretical models of professional development and the change over time of teachers' conceptions of teaching (Gibbs and Coffey, 2004).

In this study, the dissonance between some of the expressed aims of teachers and the actual impact of one-to-one tuition indicates the need for professional development. In keeping with more recent perspectives on professional development in higher education (Nicholls, 2000), this should not, however, be professional development which simply

identifies certain deficits in terms of educational skills and seeks to provide those as an addition to existing practice. Rather it should enable a cultural shift in terms of the way musicians think and act as educators and professionals, such that teaching can embody some of the attitudes and perspectives of critical reflective practice and become a means of stimulating lifelong learning with ongoing interconnections between teaching, research, professional and personal development (Nicholls, 2002). As such, professional development for teachers needs to encompass multiple dimensions within a flexible framework, similar to those identified for students in instrumental/vocal teaching and learning:

1. Creative engagement in the symbiotic relationship between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, to stimulate responsibility and autonomy in learning
2. Personalised learning
3. A move away from the isolation of the one-to-one teacher to include collaborative work, peer learning, mentoring, interconnections between and dialogue about individual pathways, and embedding of professional development within diverse artistic and educational contexts
4. A concept of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning which embraces multiple, interlinked dimensions, including aspects of presage, process and product (Biggs and Moore, 1993; Hallam, 1997b)

### ***Creative engagement in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action***

The notion of outward-looking reflective practice, based on creative engagement in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action could provide a framework underpinning

professional development, thereby stimulating autonomy in teachers, collaborative work, research based in practice, and critical reflection. This would also provide a form of modelling for students, and would support an environment of mutuality, curiosity and experiment between teacher and student. The efficacy of such practices has been underlined by Davidson (2004).

### *Personalised learning*

The structuring of training or professional development for new or existing instrumental/vocal teachers in higher education poses complex questions. Mills and Smith suggested for example, that traditional teacher training makes a difference in instrumental teachers' approach, but that these differences are not always necessarily desirable (2003). Training might not be a useful term anyway in this context, as for some teachers it might seem to pull away from and threaten the core business of engagement with music, instrumental facility and performance. Reflective practice, action research, co-mentoring and portfolios of professional development (Schon, 1987; McNiff, 1988; Turner, 2001; Nicholls, 2002), are all possible frameworks. However, the diversity of professional lives, interests and stages of development amongst the many part-time instrumental/vocal teachers in a conservatoire, means that no single structure will suit all. Teachers themselves need to be involved in designing their own programmes for development, choosing from a wide range of opportunities and being able to tailor them to their own needs. Furthermore, professional development undertaken in non-formal, and informal contexts, as well as within formal programmes, needs to be recognised, and forms of accreditation need to be found which can embrace

all three.

*Collaborative processes, and embedding professional development within artistic and educational contexts*

The isolation of one-to-one tuition is a critical issue currently creating a barrier to development. Teachers need to share practice, and to input into their own knowledge base from as wide a range of sources as possible, rather than being locked into their own practice as a player. Collaboration with specialists from other disciplines such as medicine and physiology, psychology, physiotherapy, Alexander Technique, Pilates or Yoga can also provide opportunities for critical evaluation of practice, cross-fertilisation of ideas, and exposure to a range of new perspectives on a familiar subject. It is also essential that the potential of collaborative teaching and collaborative learning is explored to a greater extent, both within individual disciplines, and across disciplines in instrumental/vocal tuition. When managed effectively this is likely to enhance learning and to reduce underlying anxiety. A vital component in designing this kind of collaborative work would be to relate it directly to professional contexts. Examples might include a series of workshops exploring processes of collaborative learning in preparation for a series of instrumental classes using these techniques; working collaboratively with a sports' psychologist linked to the preparation of performances; collaborative exploration of repertoire and musical languages as part of programming a festival. Where feasible, such projects should extend beyond a single institution, through partnerships with other artistic and educational organisations, and through wider dissemination.

### ***Development of expertise in instrumental/vocal teaching and learning***

In general, in this study teachers had strong subject knowledge and a skill base within their particular instrumental/vocal discipline, and this was an important focus in their teaching. Professional development, however, is needed to keep teachers abreast of current research in their specific instrumental/vocal disciplines. More importantly, much work is needed in more generic aspects of instrumental/vocal teaching, covering issues such as the one-to-one teacher-student relationship, student-centred learning, creative engagement in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, posture and ease of movement in playing, monitoring and evaluating students, monitoring and evaluating teaching, peer learning, responsibility and autonomy in learning.

### ***Research***

More research is needed relating to one-to-one teaching and learning. In particular, comparative studies of different models, for example of lesson frequency and length could yield important data. The delivery of tuition in one-to-one lessons, lessons with different teachers, collaborative group work combined with one-to-one lessons, or through individual tuition alongside mentoring, would also generate significant comparative evidence. Further research could usefully explore the effects of balancing teachers' contact time with students with the introduction of reflective time, co-mentoring or collaborative teaching time.<sup>9</sup> Given the fact that many of the teachers interviewed were highly in favour of group work and its benefits for students, there may

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<sup>9</sup> These practices are not only common practice in many areas of education but also in established artistic processes, for example in the generation of research sketchbooks by visual artists.

be practical ways of freeing up teachers' time to spend on reflection and professional development through exploring patterns of mixed group and individual teaching.

Within this context, there is strong potential for professional development to intersect and cross-fertilise with research (Davidson, 2004). Consequently, it is particularly important for the processes of both research and professional development to be transparent and replicable, so that they can contribute to a "next practice" ([www.musicalfutures.org.uk](http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk)), and can be sustained and expanded. With this in place, it is likely that the processes of instrumental/vocal tuition would match more closely the potential of an apprenticeship in creative reflective practice, which in turn would prepare young professionals for the ever-changing opportunities of the music profession in the twenty-first century.



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**APPENDIX 1**  
**Instrumental/Vocal Teaching and Learning**  
**Guildhall School of Music & Drama**

**Interview schedule - teachers**

In the following schedule, prompts shown in *italics* indicate aspects added to the schedule following the pilot interviews.

**Pre-amble**

Establish nature of role at the Guildhall School (context)

- How long have you been teaching at the Guildhall School?
- What kind of training have you had as a teacher?
- How do you feel your teaching compares with the ways in which you were taught?
- How many students do you have at which levels?
- What teaching are you involved in other than 1-1 lessons?
- How does your teaching at the Guildhall School fit into within your overall work pattern?
- *What things additionally or differently would like to be doing at the Guildhall School?*

**Underlying philosophy and outline of aims in teaching**

What are your fundamental aims at a teacher at the Guildhall School?

What are the learning outcomes you hope for with an undergraduate/postgraduate student?

- Aural, cognitive, technical, musical, performance skills?
- Metacognitive skills; eg knowing your weaknesses, strengths; strategies for approaching particular tasks; how to assess task requirements; planning skills; problem-solving skills; monitoring skills; evaluating skills; reflective skills?
- Generic and interpersonal skills, eg. Time management; personal reliability; listening and empathy; *leadership; supporting in a team; learning stamina; positive attitude?*

How can these aims best be conceptualized in the context of instrumental teaching at the Guildhall School?

- Apprenticeship
- Engineering, transmission
- Nurturing, facilitating
- Training
- Learning from the student

### **Characterising lessons**

What approaches do you like to use? Can you describe typical elements and structures of a lesson?

- Chat
- Warm-ups, use of body, breathing and posture
- Aural work (learning by ear/formal training/listening etc)
- Developing musical conception of piece: structure, harmonic/melodic/rhythmic movement, contextualization, recordings, editions
- Technical work
- Performance
- Improvisation and composition
- Use of IT (mini disc, video etc)
- Explanation/questions/metaphor
- Demonstration/modelling/playing together

- Learning skills – practice
- Group/one-to-one (including piano accompaniment and ensemble)
- Reflection and evaluation

What kind of planning do you do?

- Long and short term
- Planning with students
- *Motivation, self-determined direction for students*
- Practice
- Keeping records (teacher/student)
- Evidence of cross-curricular reference and integration of repertoire

### **Monitoring learning**

What forms of assessment are most effective, and which are you currently involved in?

- Formal exams
- Reports
- Informal feedback
- *Attendance at performances*
- Self-evaluation

*What feedback do you get from students? What would you like from students?*

### **Relationship between student and teacher**

What are the key issues in developing an effective teacher-student relationship?

- Ethical considerations (closed doors of teaching rooms; accountability; learning contracts; dress; physical contact; complaints; power (gender, race, authority, work opportunities)
- Unfreezing learning barriers
- *Institutional support (integration of teaching within overall programme; directors; student services; information services; course tutors; co-mentoring*

- What do you do when you don't know what to do?

### **Relationship between teacher and curriculum and institution**

How would you describe your current relationship with the institution and curriculum?

- Status
- Communication
- Surface/deep involvement
- Opportunities – developing role
- Understanding of curriculum
- Involvement in delivery of curriculum
- Professional support (information services; professional development etc)

## **Interview schedule - students**

### **Background**

Can you give me some details about how you have come to be a student at the Guildhall School, your previous musical education, and what stage you have got to here?

- Age
- Years learning
- Number of instruments
- Numbers of teachers
- Point of study at the Guildhall School
- Hours of lessons? One or more teachers?
- Any teaching yourself?

### **Aims and Objectives in learning**

What are your most important aims as a student here at the Guildhall School?

- What skills are most important to you?
- What do you want to leave with?
- Projected career?
- What is particular about 1-1, what do you get here which you can't get anywhere else?

### **Current teacher**

What happens in the lessons?

What does the teacher focus on?

Balance of input/discussion/playing between you and the teacher?

Planning together?



**The one-to-one relationship**

- What's it like with your current teacher (previous teachers)?
- Where are the boundaries?
- What do you do when things go wrong?
- How do you perceive your teacher, their professional profile, skill? How do you feel about it, excited, demoralized, empowered....?
- What do you like most/least about your teacher?

**Other teachers**

Important aspects, different from/similar to current teacher?

**Studying**

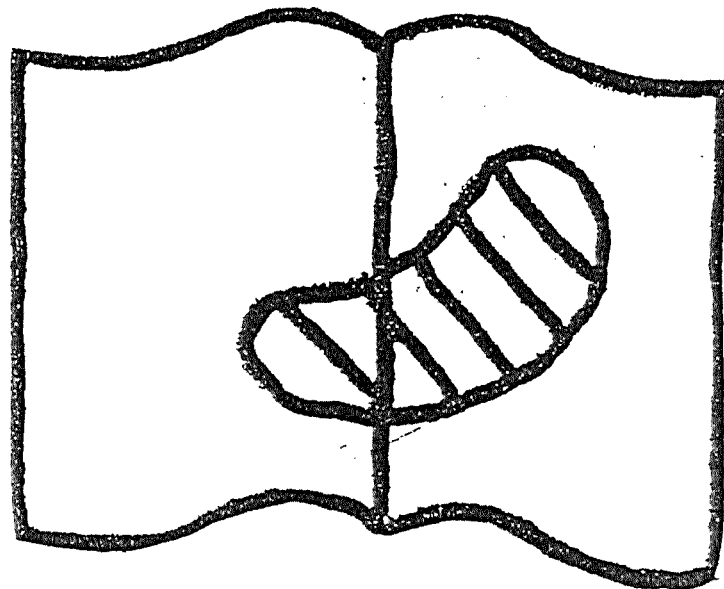
Relationship between lessons and practice?

Other important areas of study?

Integration of 1-1 within the curriculum as a whole – classes, library, other students, outside work?

# Best Copy Available

Appendix 2.



## APPENDIX 2

**Sample extract from a teacher's transcript, showing the coding for analysis**

IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



IMAGE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



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